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THE DEICIDES.

ANALYSIS

OF

THE LIFE OF JESUS,

AND OF THE

SEVERAL PHASES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
IN THEIR RELATION TO JUDAISM.

BY

J. COHEN.

TRANSLATED BY

ANNA MARIA GOLDSMID.

“Ceci est un livre de bonne foy.”—*Montaigne.*

This is a book of good faith.

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Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.—DEUT. vi. 4.

You shall have no other God before me.—EX. xx.; DEUT. v.

Take ye, therefore, good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of likeness on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.—DEUT. iv. 15.

“I believe, with a perfect faith, that God is not corporeal, and that He cannot be likened to any material form, nor be subject to changes incident to matter.”

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE work of which I now offer a translation to my brothers and sisters in belief in particular, and to English readers in general, was published seven years since in Paris. It awakened considerable and appreciative interest, and it has passed through several editions in the land of its production.

From the acquaintance of the educated English with the language and the literature of France, it appeared to me improbable that a translation would be needed in order that the book should become known in England, to that body at any rate whose world-wide defence its author so ably pleads. I find however, after repeated enquiries, that the work has had few readers, so few indeed that it may be said to be wholly unknown to the public.

So deeply has the truth of the pregnant words of the chief Rabbi of Paris, Mr. Zadoc Kahn, impressed itself on my mind and heart, that I hope he will forgive me if I quote them in justification

of my present attempt. In the eloquent sermon addressed by him on the day of his installation, December 13th, 1868, to the congregation of the "Synagogue Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth," occur the following passages reported in the "Archives Israelites" of February 1st, 1869 :—

" If we compare what we now are with what we were less than a century ago, we shall be deeply grateful to that Divine Providence, that after having subjected us to so many trials, has at length vouchsafed to put an end to our sufferings. * * *

" Thanks be to God our position is greatly changed. In the course of a few years we have gained much ground. Our religion is better understood, our history more seriously studied, and consequently sincere minds have overcome prejudices which were the result more of ignorance, than of ill-will.

" Men no longer hesitate to admit that the Jewish people is a great people that took a noble part in the world's history and deserved well of civilisation, in consequence of the true ideas it disseminated ; that it bestowed on mankind the most precious of gifts, the knowledge of God, faith in Providence, and those principles of justice and charity, which are the security alike of individuals and of nations. * * *

" What then, my brothers—for this is the point I

would place before you—what is our duty in this, our position? The reply is simple. We must not lack interest in this reactionary movement which has begun in our favour; we must not look as cold and indifferent spectators on the peaceful struggle which is everywhere going on around us and concerning us.

“For amid the discussions of which the Synagogue alone forms the subject, ought the Synagogue alone to keep silence? What! Ought she not to raise her voice, to plead her own cause, and to prove the validity of her rights?”

“Ought she to leave what may be termed the most important documents of the suit buried in impenetrable darkness? Ought she, holding priceless truths in her hand, to keep it closed? In following such a course, we should be wanting to ourselves, faithless to humanity, and should display a lukewarmness as culpable as it would be dangerous.

“Since we affirm that Providence has entrusted to us a sacred mission, since we lay claim to being the bearers in the world of the one true religion, whose doctrines are to be the rallying point of all mankind, it behoves us at least to endeavour to verify our demands, to set forth our rights in the full light of day.”

The above solemn appeal confirms me in my wish to place Monsieur Cohen's utterances within

the reach of my fellow Jews and Jewesses; for they have in my eyes, as I hope they will have in those of others, a merit rare indeed in these days of scepticism, and of rampant and undue trust in the might and right of unaided human intellect to solve all problems, all mysteries of the Universe, physical, moral and spiritual, present and future!

Monsieur Cohen has the courage to avow his uncompromising belief in the direct divine inspiration of our immortal law-giver, Moses—a profession of faith, imparting to his work a value far above and beyond that of its avowed object—the defence of his race against the secular accusation, of which they have been and are the victims.

Into what depths of misery and crime the atheistical science (?) of our continental neighbours has plunged them, we have, alas for humanity! but too clearly seen. Quenched as the light of God is in many hearts, it is now more than ever the sacred duty of His witnesses to testify to His revelation of that law, of which He made them of old, the depositaries, and to guard lovingly the flame of that lamp which illumines His altars throughout the world!

A. M. G.

INTRODUCTION.

FIRST CHAPTER.

Strauss and Renan—Crisis in all Religious Dogma—Spirit of Toleration and Conciliation—Rationalism and Dogmatism—Aim of this Work—Reply to various Objections—Intemperate Criticisms—Authenticity of the Gospels—The Pharisees and the Miracles considered from the stand-point of the Divinity of Jesus.

I.

WHEN I published the first edition of this treatise, the work elicited a manifestation of opinion, both adverse and favorable, sufficient to produce in me the conviction, that it responded to the peculiar condition of mind and belief now prevailing around us. All subsequent circumstances have tended to corroborate this impression. Questions especially which relate to the Divinity, the teachings, and the mission of the Founder of Christianity, have of late assumed an important character.

Not in Germany alone, the land in future to be recognized as the classic ground of philosophic religious criticism, where freedom of enquiry, after evoking Protestantism, has conducted it, by the force of irresistible reasoning, to the negation of all mystical doctrines;—not there alone, but in France also, this great question has come to be discussed with a degree of earnestness and gravity that cannot be misconstrued.

Under a form suited respectively to the genius of the two peoples amidst whom they write, the works of Strauss and Renan alike embody the final deductions from a long antecedent series of ideas, opinions and doctrines, of which they set forth the logical conclusion. Herein especially lies the secret of the extraordinary sensation awakened in the public mind of Germany and France, by the hypotheses of these writers on the life of Jesus.

The German School has been led on, by gradual and almost imperceptible degrees, to fritter away in detail the narratives and traditions of the Gospel. Every portion of the New Testament has been subjected to a close analysis, to a severe and scrutinising exegesis, and has been successively denuded of its authenticity, and invested with the character of an ingenious myth, or of a legend devoid of all historical basis. Thus, all that remained for Strauss to do was to collate, sum up, and arrange the fragmentary weapons of destruction prepared to his hand. Great sensation was produced when he thus disclosed to Germany, the point of scepticism which she had insensibly reached. German Exegesis recognized its own image, and was loud in its praise of a work, which was but the mirror in which the light of all its previous criticism was reflected and concentrated.

But the ponderous erudition, the form and the style of Strauss's work militated against the dissemination and the influence of his views in France. For French readers, the true Athenians of modern times, require greater charm of style, a more agreeable manner, more lightness than depth, more cleverness than science. To prove does not suffice ; a writer must please those who

are far more attracted perhaps, by brilliancy of form, than by scientific force of reasoning.

Mr. Renan possesses this essentially French quality in an eminent degree. He has imparted to German science, with which all his works are strongly imbued, much vivacity and picturesqueness of diction, a form replete with grace and attractiveness, and by these he has won for himself great popularity and the right of citizenship, on this side of the Rhine. His polemical studies, his philological and historical labours, his philosophical and religious theories, have the charm and the interest of a romance. But, reader, beware ! Though clothed in a lighter and more brilliant dress, he is, as are all the German critics, the formidable enemy of all tradition, of all dogma.

Strauss assails all secular beliefs with a ponderous battle-axe. Renan pierces them with a finely pointed sword, thrusting it up to the hilt, while he dazzles the spectators by the rapidity of his passes and the skill of his fencing. But if the weapons employed differ, the wounds they inflict are of equal depth and severity.

Where Strauss seeks to prove laboriously, Renan asserts, and evades the trouble of demonstrating. But both alike subvert the ancient faith, and pluck from the brow of Christianity its diadem of Divinity.

In the *Life of Jesus*, by Strauss, the author revels in a super-abundance of argument and proof.

In the *Life of Jesus*, by Renan, historical criticism plays but a secondary part. The author, relying on his imagination, relates to his readers the history of the human existence of the son of Mary, such as he represents it to himself, or presumes it to have been, having no regard to the Gospel narratives, and making no attempt to investigate and discuss them.

Skilful strategist ! How well he understands his public and his age.

What he sought to produce, what he has produced, is a popular book, in which the profound scholar is lost in the narrator ; a book which would repel no reader by a display of fastidious and complicated erudition, but one which would be acceptable to the majority, by means of its simplicity of thought and its graces of style.

The Christ thence evolved, has no divine attribute save the loftiness of his genius. He is, in fact, a superior man, an amiable doctor, a great reformer, an admirable moralist. To him pertains a brilliant place among the sages who, from the beginning of time, have been the pioneers on the path of infinite progress which the human race is destined to tread. By the emission of great truths, such as elevate man to a divine ideal, he takes rank with Confucius, Bouddha, Sakya-Mouni, Socrates, Moses ; though greater than any of these, more divinely inspired, yet living the same life as they lived, and employing as they did, means purely human, in the service of the sublime and glorious cause to which he devoted himself, and for which he died.

Assuredly this is not the Christ of the Gospel, nor of the Church-fathers, nor of the solemn "Credo" of the Christian world. But Mr. Renan concerns himself little about justifying the portrait he has sketched of his subject ; he is content to paint it after his own manner, and boldly exhibits his work to the public gaze.

Well, the learned may have felt surprise and believers indignation, at the sudden and extraordinary popularity attained by this work. But to deny it is impossible.

Is it the consequence of the imprudent animosity of which this book was the object ? Or is it due to the irre-

sistible curiosity which forbidden fruit ever excites ? No ! but to a much deeper and more serious cause.

As the work of Strauss in Germany, so that of Renan in France, fell in with a singular concurrence of facts and with peculiar circumstances. The latter imparted form and substance to certain vague opinions floating about in the hazy atmosphere of the old forms of religion. It rallied round a clearly defined idea, many uncertain intellects that had long been detached from orthodox creeds, and gave them a fixed stand-point. Where believers saw profanation, modern sceptics beheld a solution of their doubts and difficulties. This was the real cause of the angry excitement it awakened in the former, of the enthusiasm it kindled in the latter. It is the revealing symptom of the revolution going on in modern creeds, and of which the reality cannot be doubted, inasmuch as it has been but too often indicated and denounced by the Roman Catholic Church, through the voice of all its Pontiffs.

II.

YES ; we have evidently arrived at an epoch of religious crisis.

Christianity has been engaged during the last three centuries, in a hand-to-hand struggle with a formidable opponent. This adversary has made serious breaches in its defences, and that field of faith is strewn with ruins. I will not discuss whether Protestantism, as the advocates of free enquiry affirm, involves progress, or, whether it is, as fervent Roman Catholics declare, retrogressive. But I do know that it is an indefatigable destroyer, and that under its repeated strokes, vast gaps

are gradually produced in the Christian economy ; even such as were wrought of old by the glowing words of the first Apostles in the elysium of Paganism.

What will be the issue of this work of revolution is known to God alone. But those who believe that a humanity capable of endless perfection, will never halt on its march of progress, will with difficulty be persuaded that evil and chaotic darkness can be the fatal result of the new spirit and the new ideas which Protestantism has embedded in the soil of religious communities.

And what imparts to this great crisis its extreme seriousness is, that it acts upon the fundamental principle of society, as on that of creeds ; on the domain of politics and morals, as on that of religion.

Individual right, the offspring of free enquiry, is becoming more and more the elementary basis of social organisation. No authority, no law, no belief, is imposed. The true legitimacy of modern governments is held to reside in their having been constituted and sanctified by universal suffrage, which is virtually the sovereignty of the individual. The legislator no longer recognises a State religion ; and the equality of all creeds is universally proclaimed and respected. "Believe or die," is no longer said. To the conscience of every citizen is left the liberty of its conviction.

Eclecticism has come back to be the watchword of modern philosophy, as the Alexandrian School became the bridge that connected the old Pagan world with dawning Christianity. No doctrine is prohibited, no system absolutely condemned ; the aim is to combine them, to bring them into harmony, and to deduce from them certain general truths easy of acceptance by all impartial and candid minds.

Philosophy has not broken with faith, but it has thrown off its trammels in order to ascend from blind belief, to that only which can be clearly demonstrated. Formerly the slave of theology (*ancilla theologiæ*), philosophy now claims to be its equal in its search after, and its declaration of, truth. As philosophy requires to know the mysteries of life, of creation, of the divine nature itself, it demands in like manner, the demonstration of all ancient dogma. In a word, philosophy has removed the pivot of all belief and has made it to rest on reason alone.

Rationalism is, in the realm of religion, what eclecticism is in that of philosophy. It rejects only the incomprehensible and the mysterious, but it accepts all which is proved to be just and true in every church and in every religion.

III.

IF we examine ourselves with candour, we shall find the principle of toleration deeply impressed on our consciences. We say to ourselves, that if men really desired this, they would find more easily than is at first apparent, points of agreement in certain fundamental principles which, after all, form the really solid basis of all creeds. All rest on two sublime and glorious truths, which no idolatry has had the power to weaken—truths which display the most universal and the most resplendent of revelations, the love of God and the love of our neighbour. To these, no religion, no men, hesitate to assent. All agree in believing in a God the Creator, in morality and in virtue.

Division, and with division the conflict of passion,

begins where human intelligence endeavours to pass beyond these elementary truths, and to penetrate into the dark regions of infinitude and eternity ; when it would substitute for reason which proves, dogmatism which enforces ; when not satisfied with admitting the " Great first Cause " of all that exists, it seeks also to define that Cause, its nature and attributes ; when it dares to combine with the idea of God, the image and the representation of His Divinity ; when it invests that Being who is pre-eminently invisible, infinite and immaterial, with a personality more or less resembling the forms with which we are familiar,—a Jupiter Tonans, an old man with a white beard, a fanciful incarnation, as in the Indian forms of worship, or a mysterious Trinity, according to Christian doctrine. Doubt extends and controversy overspreads the earth, when we seek to pierce the secret designs of an inscrutable Providence, when we affirm what it was and what it wrought before the visible universe was called forth out of chaos, when we have the audacity to teach what it destines for us beyond the tomb, when we have the presumption to proclaim a hell and a purgatory, the existence of eternal flames and endless beatitude, Elysian fields traversed by sages, Styx and Acheron, where the wicked are punished ; delightful gardens, where the just enjoy unfailing pleasures in the embraces of celestial Houris.

Here faith is staggered, the mind becomes confused, and reason enters its protest. Where is truth ? Where is error ? Where is the irresistible light ? And peoples, of one mind as they are with regard to the idea of God and the sense of duty, range themselves under hostile banners, become intolerant and fanatical, anathematise, contend with, and destroy each other, in order to impose

on each other the acceptance of principles, which can neither be understood, nor demonstrated.

Such is the painful history of religious dogma. As long as society has existed, nothing has prevailed throughout our sad humanity, save confusion and strife in reference to these insoluble questions.

During the last half century, and especially during the last few years, tendencies to fusion and to candid enquiry into the various existing beliefs have arisen among all parties. Ingenuous minds of all creeds have evinced a disposition, not to deny absolutely all that is mysterious and supernatural, but to keep aloof from obscure problems in order to offer each other a hand on the neutral ground of moral ideas and incontestable truths, which are, like the elements of all nature, the common patrimony of the human race. Holy harmony of hearts and souls, which would mark the advent of the reign of God on earth, if it should succeed in re-establishing here below, pristine union and brotherhood.

Renan's "Life of Jesus," by divesting the founder of Christianity of all that is mysterious in his history, by clothing him with a humanity characterised by an ideal sublimity, but wholly devoid of all that is incomprehensible or divine, presents a striking indication of the spirit of our age in matters of religion; and the reception accorded to that work, clearly shows the true direction of public feeling in this domain of mental enquiry.

IV.

THOUGH far inferior to that of its forerunner, the popularity attained by the work that I offer anew to the public, is in my view, a like significant symptom of the actual

state of minds and creeds. My object is far from possessing the importance of that which Renan and Strauss doubtless, had in view. My sole desire has been to raise my voice on behalf of the Hebrew people, of the powerful religious race to which I belong, and to combat energetically the prejudices to which the inexplicable accusation of DEICIDE under which they have laboured during more than eighteen hundred years, has subjected them.

In the first edition the aim of this book is defined thus :—

The Gospel text has produced in me a profound conviction, that the non-recognition of a God in the founder of Christianity, cannot, by possibility, be made a matter of serious reproach to the Jews of the Herodian age. If they were mistaken on this point, their mistake was made in good faith. In fact, Jesus, from causes which it would be foreign to my plan to discuss, did not will that they should be convinced, either of his mission, or of his divinity.

“In entering upon the demonstration of these truths, I appeal to the good faith and the justice of my readers. I pray them not to pass judgment, either on the author, or on his work, until they have honestly examined the authentic proofs on which I rely. Above all, I request them not to form an exaggerated estimate of the aim of this book, and not to impute to me aggressive intentions, which are far alike from my head and my heart.

“I seek not to combat either the principles of Christianity, or the acts of its founder. I stand up in defence of an unhappy nation, that has been persecuted for centuries as being guilty of the crime of Deicide. I search attentively through all the inculpatory documents of the suit cited against them, and I ask myself whether it is true that this nation did commit such a crime, above all had they the wish to commit it ; and if not, can they be held responsible for it before God and man, before the tribunal of history and that of posterity ?

“ But while seeking to establish in favour of Judaism, the unadmitted truth, I neither discuss, nor attack any of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. I do not say to the faithful among Christians, ‘ You are wrong to believe in the divinity of Christ, in his birth, his life, his death, and his supernatural resurrection.’ I do not say to them, ‘ Your faith is a falsehood and an absurdity.’ I do not endeavour, as so many other philosophers and so many other historians, such as Strauss and the German school, have endeavoured, to disprove the authenticity of the Gospels and even the very existence and the biography of Jesus Christ himself. On the contrary, I admit as the starting-point of my investigations, the truth of the Gospel narrative and of its most important passages. It will not assuredly be expected that I, a believing disciple of the faith of Israel, a sincere worshipper and adorer of the One only and invisible God, should admit without reserve the divinity of Jesus and the reality of his Messianic mission. But my critique does not necessarily involve anything directly contrary to this hypothesis, however manifestly it may be opposed to every principle of my religious convictions.

“ I simply say to all men of candour and good sense, ‘ Come, let us examine together Here is the Gospel, the book revered by the Christian world ; here is the only testimony remaining to us of the intercourse of Jesus with the Jewish people. Let us admit that Jesus was really the son of God who had come to save Israel, and with Israel, the human race. Let us admit that he was really the Messiah predicted by the prophets. Does it result from the Gospel narrative that the Jews of the time of Herod were aware of this divine nature and of this sacred mission ? Herein lies the whole question ; for, if visited by a God, the Jews had not the consciousness of his divinity—if, in proceeding against him and putting him to death in accordance with their law, they did not and they could not, know that they were killing a God who had come expressly to deliver them—how could they be held guilty of the crime of Deicide ? How could they have been

accursed, how could they have been punished for a crime, which they had no intention of committing ?

“ ‘Or again, if it had been written in the designs of the Eternal, that it was necessary a Divine being should die as an atoning victim, in order that the sins of men should be expiated, and if the Jews had been chosen to accomplish this bloody sacrifice, how could they be guilty, when they were but the blind instruments of the almighty will of God ?’ ”

These views and these conclusions have met with a most cordial reception from a much larger number of serious minds than I could have ventured to anticipate. People desired to learn what a devoted adherent of Judaism thought on that great question, the life and the divinity of Jesus ; and, as it has been seen I hope, that the moderation with which I expressed my opinions, betrayed no other desire save that of setting forth the truth which long years of reciprocal hatred had obscured, I have received, and I preserve with pleasure, many precious evidences of sympathy.

This book, on the other hand, has been subjected to severe criticisms, some emanating from the most violent outbursts of a faith which permits neither examination nor contradiction ; others serious and courteous in their expression, and belonging to a higher order of ideas. There are also some who reproach me with demanding, as did the Pharisees of the time of Jesus, material proofs of a divinity, which revealed itself far more by its moral splendour than by external and physical signs. Others again blame me for having, while I admitted the authenticity of the Gospel, neglected to cite all the exegetic labours of the last fifty years which prove that the biographies of Jesus are all apocryphal, and that nothing certain is known concerning his life, his birth, and his death.

In the face of opinions so conflicting, I think it is useful to define my views and convictions with greater precision.

V.

I EXCLUDE at once from this discussion the criticisms first alluded to above. They grow out of deep and inflexible convictions, which I do not seek to offend and cannot expect to modify. My aim is not to convince of their error sincere believers in the Christian religion ; that is a matter of conscience, with respect to which I have nothing to blame, nor to attempt. Only they do appear to me to lack justice and good sense, when they evince irritation at the mere handling by a son of the Hebrews, of that mysterious question—the Divinity of Jesus.

Is it not this question alone which has separated Christianity from Judaism during eighteen hundred years, and has produced an irreconcilable difference between the two faiths ? Is it not this question which has served as the pretext for the persecutions that the exiles of Zion have suffered, in every part of the Christian world ?

Thanks to the progress of civilisation, thanks to the well-nigh universal triumph of ideas of liberty and equality, the descendants of Israel at this day have reconquered almost everywhere, their rights as men and as citizens. Is it not natural that among them some voices should be raised to defend them at last, against the accusations which have caused their long martyrdom ? Is it not just, that their cause should at last be brought and argued before the tribunal of public opinion, and that

it should be ascertained, whether or not their fathers were guilty of this strange crime of Deicide—a crime, the expiation of which, it is sought to visit eternally on their posterity?

But I do not hope for so much candour on the part of those to whom I refer. They do not investigate themselves, and they dislike any attempt at investigation on the part of others; they will not accept this great conquest of modern times—liberty of conscience, which allows to other creeds, not to be aggressive, (this would be an ingratitude and a wrong), but to exist, and to defend themselves against secular prejudices.

It is not then for them that I seek to explain more fully the idea of this book and the point of view from which I write. I dismiss from my mind passions which reason not, and I consider only the opinions of those who have honored me by a serious discussion.

VI.

I HAVE said that I have been blamed for admitting the Gospel text unreservedly.

Certainly, after the vast critical labors of which this text has formed the subject, I might have indulged, in my turn, in objections in future easily raised, and in a display of borrowed erudition on the authenticity of the Gospels. But I should have found no advantage in this course for the aim I had in view, and my conclusions would have lost in clearness of demonstration, what they might have gained scientifically. In fact, that aim was not to convince those who do not believe in the historical truth of the Gospel; for persons holding these views, the life and death of Jesus are alike matters of un-

certainty ; and thence it ensues, that the alleged crime of Deicide could not, in their opinion, ever have been committed. But those to whom it is of the last importance to prove that this accusation is devoid of any real basis, are those who do firmly believe in the historical accuracy of the facts recorded by the four Evangelists.

If my arguments in favour of the Hebrew people are valid, they are so, because I accept the very texts on which the faith of the most fervent Christians is grounded. For out of these very texts, the manifest proof is adduced, that Jesus never revealed himself as God to the Jews of his epoch : that he systematically concealed from them the signs of his divinity and of his Messiahship (admitting even that these signs were really produced), and of his Messianic mission ; finally, that nothing either in his acts, or in his words corresponded with the traditional belief, idea, or hopes prevailing with regard to this long expected deliverer. Viewed in this light, not only was a criticism on the Gospels superfluous, but on the contrary, the text was to me of incalculable importance.

Besides, I must here confess that I do not share in the doubts which have been raised as to the authenticity of the Books of the New Testament. The contradictions even, which are found between the four biographies of Jesus, appear to me to be evidence of truth ; for if the Gospels dated from an earlier period, and if their collation was not the work of those whose names they bear, the pious fraud to which it is supposed they owe their creation, would have been more skilfully carried out, and would have imparted to the narrative the very unity which it lacks.

Notwithstanding the silence of contemporaneous authors, too many circumstances and traditions testify to

the existence of Jesus for a doubt of the fact to be admitted. This silence proves but one thing, that Jesus produced at first, no greater impression than so many pseudo-Messiahs had done before, the number of these pretenders having been large at a period, alike of political and religious oppression. But that he lived, that he taught, and that he gathered around him ardent disciples, whose enthusiasm survived the death of their master, it is, as it appears to me, impossible to deny.

Doubtless, in considering the Gospels, allowance must be made for this enthusiasm itself, and for the mental tendencies of each of these biographers. Seeing that these Gospels were not edited till after the death of Jesus, according to the more or less correct, the more or less concurrent reminiscences of his disciples, some errors, perhaps, assuredly many amplifications and much exaggeration crept into these narratives, and developed the legendary, at the expense of the historical portions. But the basis and the principal events are evidently accurate; the accessory details and the differences of form excepted, it is easily to be demonstrated that they are reproduced in each of the four biographies.

If I were permitted to propound in my turn, a hypothesis in order to account for the discrepancies to be found in each of these, the probable cause appears to me to be this:—There are three distinct periods in the development of the life of Jesus, in each of which he exhibits himself under a different aspect, and in each of which he betrays different aspirations from those of the other two phases.

In the first period he is the eloquent doctor, the bold reformer, the prophet who reprimands chiefs and people, and recalls them to the great principles of justice and morality.

In the second period, he is the Messiah, the Christ who reveals himself to his disciples, and proclaims himself to be He who is to fulfil in Israel all the promises of the prophets. Miracles flash around him ; he lives, he moves, he acts amidst marvels ; he is wrapped in the supernatural, and the phenomena of the heavens and the prodigies of earth appear destined to attest to mortals the presence of the messenger of the Eternal.

Finally, in the third period, Jesus affirms his Divinity ; he identifies himself with God ; he is the equal of the Father ; he is God Himself ; it is he who will judge the living and the dead.

Jesus and his disciples attain to this mystical conception only consecutively and by degrees. The Gospel narrative admits no doubt of this fact. The revelation of the divinity of the son of Mary was not made until he approached the last days of his terrestrial existence. In like manner his Messianic mission was not formulated until long after his disciples had appeared on the scene.

Now the Evangelists exactly embody, by their respective forms and characters, these three successive periods.

Matthew and Mark, whose narratives seem for the most part to be copies of each other, are sparing of the marvellous. They lay much stress on the moral teaching of Jesus, but they do not connect any miraculous circumstance either with his birth, or with his youth. According to them, Joseph receives the command to keep Mary with him, and the announcement of the miraculous conception of her son, not in a vision, but in a dream. The idea of divinity is scarcely perceptible in the Synoptics. The acts and the discourses which they attribute to Jesus have a human rather than a divine character. Evidently Matthew and Mark endeavoured especially to

make known in Jesus a prophet, or at most, a Messiah ; they did not reveal in him God.

Luke, on the contrary, appears to pertain to the second period of the life of Jesus. The legendary portion is largely developed by his pen. The heavens are agitated ; the heavenly host move around Christ the Saviour ; the son of Mary is transfigured, and casts off by degrees all the attributes of his corporeal nature. He is not yet God in all His majesty, but he is more than a prophet, and it is clearly perceptible that ere long the revelation of his divinity will be proclaimed.

This grand mission is reserved for John, the well-beloved disciple of his master, and the mysticist of primitive Christianity. He alone furnishes us with details, he alone explains to us the relation in which the Jewish people stood to Jesus, when the latter disturbed the monotheistic doctrine by the affirmation of his divinity. He alone sees in his master nothing but God, the Word made flesh, the Infinite revealed for a moment in a finite form. The mystery is accomplished ; Heaven has for a brief space ceded God to the earth ; earth has given Him back to Heaven, and the Father and the Son have now become a mysterious unity. The discourses of Jesus, simple and intelligible as they are in the synoptic Gospels, and even in the Gospel of Luke, are reproduced in John under a mystic form, strange and incomprehensible to the majority, and of a nature to strengthen the incredulity of the Hebrew people, rather than to convince and attract them.

Thus the progressive march is clearly defined. In the narratives of Matthew and Mark, appear prominently and specially, the Reformer and Prophet ; in that of Luke, the Messiah accompanied by a miraculous legend ; in that of John, God.

Thus where so many critics have pointed out flagrant contradictions, and have pronounced the text to be absolutely apocryphal, there should be recognised only the inevitable results of the varying stand-points on which the four biographers have respectively placed themselves. Does it follow that all these discordant records must be unreservedly accepted as historical truths? Far from this ; but viewed in the light in which we have examined them, they are much less discrepant than they at first appear to be. And as, after all, it is the only monument that remains to us of this great and important epoch, we may admit without very considerable difficulty, the sufficient authenticity of the principal facts on which they well-nigh agree.

VII.

INDEPENDENTLY of these points of historical criticism, an objection has been addressed to me of far more serious moral import, which affects me so closely as to induce me to discuss it with unreserved frankness.

It is asserted that I am virtually a son of those Pharisees on whom Jesus passed so severe a judgment, and who required miracles, celestial phenomena, the disruption of the elements, and a host of supernatural occurrences to convince them of the divinity of the son of Mary. His divine principles of justice and charity, his self-devotion to the whole human race, his law of love and mercy, it is argued, are more salient revelations of his being God himself, than physical phenomena ; and one must be blind indeed, not to see it. Here mutual understanding is indispensably necessary.

I do not discuss the relation in which Jesus stood

to the Jews of his age, as a philosopher: I merely seek to ascertain what that relation was, as a historian, by the aid of the only documents that remain to us. Now these documents show irrefutably that the Messiah promised to the inhabitants of Judea, the liberator announced by the prophets, was to reveal himself by certain characteristic signs, both natural and supernatural, which were to constitute, in accordance with the traditions of the Hebrew people, the striking proofs of his mission.

I have carefully enumerated the several articles of the popular belief in this respect, and I have shown that not one of the conditions by which the Hebrews might know and proclaim the promised Messiah, was realised in the person of Jesus. I have also proved by unimpeachable texts, that Jesus and the Apostles shared this popular belief in the necessity of certain revealing signs. If the son of Mary, from motives which it is needless for me to seek to define, did not, during his lifetime, fulfil the material conditions of his Messianic mission, he promised their realisation to his disciples on the occasion of a second and early advent. To judge of facts and ideas removed from us by the lapse of several centuries, we must necessarily place ourselves mentally in the centre of the circumstances amidst which they arose.

But I go further still, and I request the particular attention of my readers to the chapter in which I treat the question of the miracles attributed by the Gospel to Jesus. They will therein perceive, that according to the unquestioned doctrines of the Judaism of that age, these miracles were inevitably devoid of importance so far as they concern the divinity of Jesus; and far from blaming the Pharisean doctors, and far from accusing them, as the

Gospel does, of evincing a narrow and coarse materialism, we ought to admire the largeness and liberality which distinguished the Pharisean doctrine in this field of enquiry.

Miracles apart, there remain doubtlessly the moral teachings and the great truths, so admirably elucidated by the prophet of Galilee. I have studied this serious question with the deepest and most scrupulous attention, and the investigation has furnished me with evident proof, that there is not a single precept, a single thought, either in the discourses of Jesus, or in the maxims of the Gospel, which had not been set forth long before his age, often clothed in language far more striking by the Bible, by the prophets, the philosophers, the moralists, and the doctors of Judea.

To those who reproach the Hebrew people with having required proofs from Jesus, this double observation presents an ample reply. Here, in fact, an unanswerable dilemma presents itself.

How could the Jews recognise in Jesus God incarnate, save by irresistible revelations? Then, in what did these revelations consist, if Jesus gave nothing to the Hebrew people save what they had long before received from their legislators, their prophets and their sages, without one of these ever having pretended to be God, or the son of God?

How again could the Jews recognise the Messiah in Jesus, but by the fulfilment of all the signs and of all the promises predicted by the Messianic prophets? Now, not only did Jesus fail to give a single proof of his mission, not only did he persist in obstinately refusing this evidence, which after the most painful suspense he was implored to furnish; but he did not accomplish in the

presence of the Hebrew people any of the predictions the sacred books contain.

Let those who so bitterly reproach the Jews who were contemporary with Jesus, for having dared to demand some revealing signs, candidly examine their own mind. If even in the present age of extreme spiritualism, a being bearing the human form, were to proclaim himself God and the son of God, in vain would he preach the most sublime morality ; a crowd of modern Pharisees would not be satisfied with that mysterious declaration, but would demand striking, positive, and palpable proofs of its justification. I know the spirit of my age well enough to affirm that this is a truth, and I deem it an act of injustice to blame the old Pharisees of eighteen centuries passed, for entertaining doubts, which would appear natural in our age of civilisation and progress.

Further, I have no hesitation in stating my opinion on this point, quite unreservedly.

SECOND CHAPTER.

Causes of the Incredulity of the Jews as to the Divinity and the Messianic Mission of Jesus.—The two Messianic Missions.—Universal Aspirations of Judaism.—The God of the Hebrews.—Jewish Philosophy.—The Immortality of the Soul.—The Kingdom of God.—The Spiritual and the Temporal.—Providence and Liberty.—The Unity of the Human Race.—Brotherhood and Neighbourly Love.—Influence of Jewish Ideas on Social Progress.—Their Future.

I.

THE principal cause of the incredulity of the Jews concerning the divinity of Jesus was—Jesus himself.

'The unalterable faith of Israel, its single dogma, the basis of its social and religious existence, is—the ABSOLUTE UNITY and INVISIBILITY of God. My ideas on the future which is reserved for this profound belief—a belief more philosophic than dogmatic—will be set forth further on ; but whatever may be thought of it, it is incontestible that this has ever been the supreme law, the strength and the hope of the Hebrew people. They have lived for it and by it ; for this they have never ceased to struggle and to suffer. Hence the material appearance of the God who, according to the tradition of the Bible, had declared to Moses, "No man living can see my face and live ;" and also, "I am seen only through my works," the incarnation of a God, a

pure Spirit, of whom the great Hebrew legislator had said — “Take heed unto your souls, for ye saw no similitude when God spoke unto you at Sinai out of the midst of the fire,” must have offended all preconceived ideas and notions ; in a word, the personification of the uncreated principle was opposed to all the ideas held by the inflexible guardians of Monotheism, and must have excited them against him who, under a human and perishable form, set himself up as the equal of the Eternal and the Infinite. Thus, this feeling was not long in showing itself with great violence. The popular indignation and the general mental condition are very faithfully portrayed to us in the Gospel of John, especially in the very characteristic episode in which the Jews desire to stone Jesus, because “*being man he pretends to be God.*” Neither miracles nor moral truth could stand in Israel, in face of the attack thus made on the first great principle of the Unity and the Immateriality of the Divine One.

The Jews were then, and despite the stake and persecution, have ever remained, essentially and eminently spiritualists in their convictions concerning the Deity. Christianity fancied it could compromise, to a certain extent, with the anthropomorphic doctrines of the Pagan world ; but Judaism has ever guarded the purity of the Monotheistic faith with unconquerable energy, convinced that that faith will become, sooner or later, by means of the inevitable progress of reason and conscience, the law of the whole human race. If, as will afterwards be seen, the Gospel offered itself to the Roman world and to Paganism as a manifestation of God on earth and a wonderful revelation,—for the Hebrews it discovered neither truth nor progress, for it contaminated the

Monotheistic principle, on which alone, in its indestructibility, the faith and the mission of Israel repose.

The Jews are generally accused of having closed their eyes to the light. In the sight of the incorruptible guardians of the Divine Unity and Spirituality, the mysteries of Christianity were not light, but darkness.

II.

IF the belief of the Jews in the One Immaterial and Infinite God is absolutely incompatible with the divinity of Jesus, their Messianic dogmas are equally inconsistent with the character of the Messiah, such as the Christian doctrine proclaims it to be.

The advent of Messiah, according to the prophetic traditions of Judaism, is far less indicative of the appearance of an All-powerful Being, King, Prophet, or God, than of the inauguration of an epoch of moral, religious and social grandeur. Doubtless, the hopes of Israel do not divide this new era from that of the re-establishment of Jewish nationality, and the restoration of the throne of David in Jerusalem, newly arisen from its ruins ; but if the ancient capital of the kings of Judah is destined to become the centre of the hopes, and the "house of prayer" of all peoples, this is but a secondary incident in the comprehensive and universal revolution which will then have been accomplished. The essential characteristic of the Messianic epoch will be the declaration and the recognition of the UNITY and SPIRITUALITY of God by all the nations of the earth. Image and materialistic worship will be no more. "On that day," say the Prophets, "the Lord will be One, and His name One." And as a consequence of this faith in the DIVINE

UNITY, the Unity of the human race, the fraternal union of all the children of God, will become the holy doctrine of society and of individuals. No more war, no more devastating armies, but everywhere harmony, equality, peace, and prosperity. I shall cite later the striking prophecies which foretold, more than thirty centuries ago, this era of universal well-being, concord, and happiness, which has ever remained the hope and the aim of the Hebrew people. Judaism does not expect the domination of the whole world by means of the advent of the Messiah; from that advent it expects the victory of Monotheism. It has the conviction, that by its means all men will be initiated into the eternal truths, which, ever since the revelation at Sinai, have been the heritage of the sons of Israel. It will then at once be understood, that the corporeal and terrestrial apparition of a being who proclaimed himself to be God, was irreconcilable with the grander idea of a Messiah, such as the Hebrews conceived, and still conceive it to be.

Since Judaism professed that the absolute Unity of God would infallibly become the dogma of all the families of the earth, this apparent duality of the divine principle must naturally have been rejected by it, as a flagrant contradiction to its religious faith.

Christianity, carried away by its mystic tendencies, could adopt doctrines respecting the Messiah which have no relation with those of the Hebrew prophets, or with the secular traditions of the Jews; but the Israelites are the fathers of the Messianic belief. Of them it was born, by them it has been preserved, and for them essentially it is that the prophecies of Holy Writ on this subject, are to be realised. It may be reasonably presumed that they comprehended this doctrine more truly than the

Roman population, just converted to Christianity, were capable of doing. However, in the course of this work it will be seen that it is not possible to apply either to the life, or the teaching of Jesus, the belief which prevailed in Israel in reference to the epoch of the Messiah ; and this further corroborates the justification of the resistance of the Jewish people.

And as in the very first years of the Christian era, so to this day, two Messianic missions stand face to face, the one contending that all was accomplished eighteen hundred years since, by the birth, the life, and the death of Jesus ; the other waiting, with imperturbable patience, the fulfilment of the Divine promises. What separates them even further, is their respective principle.

The Christian Messianic theory founds the truth which it seeks to enforce on all humanity, upon an impenetrable mystery, by converting the saving Messiah into a divine incarnation—a verb in a material body—a God who was born, who lived, who suffered, and who died as other men.

The Jewish Messianic theory, on the contrary, rests on no mysterious dogma. It hopes that from Jerusalem, once more the metropolis of the religious world, the rays of peaceful truth will break over all the peoples of the earth, reconciled by the universal proclamation which everywhere will re-establish fraternity and peace, and inaugurate the reign of God.

The Christian Messianic theory teaches that the Messiah has already come, although the world is still distracted by wars, discord, tyranny, the sanguinary conflict of all passions, and by political and religious idolatry.

The Jewish Messianic theory does not believe in

the advent of Messiah until universal peace shall be coincident with his era, and until those laws of justice and love shall prevail, which were declared to be the providential signs of the Redeemer of mankind.

I here simply state this contradiction. This is not the place for me to enter into judgment on it. Certain it is that, from the most remote period of its historical existence, the aspirations of Judaism were not limited to the development of its internal and individual life. It considered the whole world to be its domain and its future empire, not under a material, but under a moral aspect, and this ambition has left a deep impress on all the principles and all the events of its history.

III.

CATHOLICISM, using this word in its etymological sense of "*Universal Belief*," is, in fact, the very essence of Jewish Monotheism ; it is coeval with its revelation and with its original institution.

"In thee," said a heavenly voice to Abraham, the first apostle of the Unity—"in thee shall all the peoples of the earth be blessed." * Almost at every page, the Pentateuch, the entire Bible, Moses and all the Prophets, reiterate this solemn promise, and unite indissolubly with the future of Israel, the future of the whole human race.

Of all the religions of antiquity, Judaism alone has conceived and exalted this sublime thought of universal reconciliation into a dogma ; it is the only one in which are combined, with its lofty and mysterious hopes, the triumph of its religious faith and the happiness of all the nations of the earth.

This it is which renders the Hebrew people a peculiar people, a people having a mission ; this it is which, de-

* Genesis xxii. 18.

spite the annihilation of its political nationality—despite the horrible persecutions of which it has been the victim, imparts to its extraordinary existence, to its social permanency, a grandeur which cannot fail to make a deep impression. Further, the expansive force which from the time of the Apostles Christianity has displayed, evidently results from the spirit of proselytism and the Messianic impulse imparted to it by Judaism.

The notion of conquering the moral world and of converting it to the worship of God-Messiah would never have arisen in the mind of a Greek or a Roman. It could be born in the soul only of a Jew, powerfully imbued with the hopes of the Synagogue, and convinced that the hour of their realisation had struck. I may venture to add, it could have arisen in the mind of a Pharisee only, for in Phariseeism alone, so little understood, so unjustly decried, did the Messianic doctrine assume the lofty and exclusively religious character, by which alone its triumph could be ensured.

I shall, doubtless, astonish many prejudiced minds, when I say that Phariseeism was the “Protestantism of the Jewish church,” and that it introduced therein a spirit of philosophic liberty and enlarged views, to the independence and height of which we are far from having yet attained, while at the same time, it worked a radical reform in religious organisation and in the narrow formulas of official Judaism. But I reserve the demonstration of this subject for a special treatise, which I hope soon to publish under the title of “*The Pharisees.*” It is incontestible that the Pharisean school furnished to the Messianic idea, marvellously comprehensive doctrines, and of a nature calculated to kindle enthusiasm in its disciples. It is also certain, that a great spirit of

proselytism was rife among the Pharisees. According to the Gospel narrative,* Jesus himself reproaches them with it, and his view on this point is confirmed by the "Aphorisms of the Sages," † a collection of Pharisean maxims which strenuously enjoins the multiplying of proselytes.

If St. Paul had not drawn his doctrines from the school of his Master Gamaliel, one of the luminaries of Phariseeism of his time, I doubt much whether he would have conceived the magnificent idea of setting forth to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, an idea violently combated by the other Apostles, though it secured the triumph of Christianity. And I suppose that the famous illumination on the road to Damascus was not a divinely inspired vision, but a marvellous resolution suggested to the young Apostle by his Pharisean training, which imparted to him an intuitive anticipation of the great destiny opening before him, if he took advantage of the favourable moment.

However this may be, Judaism, from the moment it proclaimed by the voice of its Patriarchs the Unity of God, has never ceased, for a single instant, to affirm that sooner or later Monotheism will be the faith of the whole world, and to consider itself as having received from God himself the mission of working out its triumph. All the principles of its law, all the elements of its religious and moral dogma, are deeply marked with this all-embracing aspiration. Its doctrines are as universal as is its ambition. I request permission to enforce this view, which is of great historical importance, and of special signification with regard to the main aim of this book.

* Matthew xxiii. 15, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte."

† Perké Aboth, "Sayings of the Fathers," chap. iv. 2.

IV.

THE God of Judaism is not, as has been incorrectly stated, a national God, the divinity exclusively of a small tribe, to whom the rest of the world are strangers. Far from this. He is represented to us as the God of the universe, the King of kings, the Sovereign Master of humanity, the soul of the world. He alone created the heaven, the earth, and all that is therein ; there is no other God besides Him. He is the Only One, "He is that He is," that is, the Being pre-eminently Supreme ; the only One endowed with existence in all its plenitude ; a Being, who hath no commencement, and will have no end. Hence the mysterious name by which He is designated, is synonymous with "ETERNAL."*

The Eternal declares, by the voice of Moses, "I alone am, there is no other God beside Me ; I kill and I make alive ; I wound and I heal ; and none can deliver out of my hand." All the linguistic formulas by which the Bible portrays the might and the majesty of God, are in harmony with the immensity of His essence and of His power. The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament is the work of His hand ; infinite space is His throne, and the earth is His footstool : kings and peoples, at the sound of His voice, hastily gather themselves together from the extremities of the earth ; the isles are as a grain of sand weighed in the balance of His justice ; the phenomena of nature are His ministers, obedient to His word. All incorporeal things must

* The name of Jehovah is, in fact, composed in Hebrew of the three tenses, past, present, and future of the verb to be ; it means, he was, he is, and ever will be.

necessarily and inevitably be materialised, when we seek to paint them in words ; yet never does human language become more sublime at the idea of the Divinity, than does that of the Bible.

This “ God of the spirits of all flesh ” (such is the biblical phrase) reveals Himself in every page of the sacred volume, as the Sovereign of every created being. If one family, one race on earth was particularly chosen to become the depositaries of the Eternal truth, of which He alone is the source and focus, it was because that family and that people had, by a spontaneous effort of their conscience and their reason, preserved more faithfully than any others, the primitive traditions of the human race, and had consequently cast aside the polytheistic errors into which other men had fallen. But, while sanctifying this race, and calling them to be His chosen servants, the God of the Bible does not abandon the other races of man, who are equally His creatures. To Israel He entrusts the mission of becoming to them an example, a guide, and a support on the path which leads to the true, the good, and the beautiful. And the sacred writings incessantly recall to the Hebrews this solemn mandate, and at the same time exhort them to consider all the rest of mankind as their brothers. “ We have but one Father, who is in heaven,” exclaims Malachi. “ Has not one only God created us ? ” Not to Israel alone hath the Eternal sent His prophets, to recall to justice and truth those who have turned aside and violated the rigid laws of duty. The sacred orators, the inspired agents of the Divine thought, address the other nations likewise, in the name of the All-powerful Sovereign of the heavens and of the earth ; they severely denounce Babylon, Egypt, and Assyria ; they

exhort sinful Nineveh to repentance. Long before the Gospel and St. Paul, they preach to listening Pagans forgiveness of sin.

V.

IN the domain of philosophy, this same largeness of ideas, this same universality of principle are manifest. Is not the doctrine of the Unity of God, in fact, the grandest and most complete of all philosophisms? With one word Moses annihilates rationalism and pantheism, when he says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth." Spiritual religion in all its splendour is first proclaimed in the Bible; it first teaches us that God is Eternal, Invisible, Infinite, Immaterial; it teaches us the separate existence of soul and body; it is the Bible that discloses to us the idea of providence, ever active in the government of the Universe; it is the Bible which establishes the admirable relation of Father and son, between God and man, and which determines the aim of man's being, and of that of the whole human race, when saying to the first, "Be ye holy as your Father in heaven is holy;" and to the second, "Strive ever after that blessed epoch, when truth and concord shall join all nations in a fraternal union." By whom, then, if not by the Bible, were those imperishable maxims declared unto the world—those splendid precepts of morality and of virtue, which have been its guides for nearly two thousand years? Who taught man resignation in suffering, humility in greatness? Who revealed to him his moral responsibility, here and hereafter?

Certainly, the doubtful point as to whether the Pentateuch did or did not proclaim the doctrines of a

future life and of the immortality of the soul, admits of discussion ; but it is equally certain, that that doctrine appears after Moses, everywhere in the Bible, as one of the most incontestible articles of Jewish belief. The legend of the witch of Endor, the Book of Kings, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and all the Prophets, admit of no doubt that the Hebrews believed in the continued existence of the soul after death. Long before the age of Jesus, this was a characteristic doctrine of the teachings of the Pharisees, in contradistinction, on this point, to those of the School of the Sadducees. Thus Judaism has always preached the immortality of the soul. All that can be advanced is, that it did not set it forth from the beginning, either as an indispensable article of faith, or as a revealed dogma. It behoves us to explain why.

Moses created neither an abstract philosophy, nor a religion for the individual ; he constituted a people, a society ; and psychological theories of immortality could assume, necessarily, but a secondary part in this comprehensive achievement. Nations cannot be governed by the doctrine of a future state, but by terrestrial rewards and punishments. Neither the constitutional rights, nor the civil or penal codes of modern peoples speak of the immortality of the soul. The Pentateuch, which was rather the social law, than the religious doctrine of the Hebrews, does not impart to it greater prominence. In adopting this course Moses obeyed a higher idea, one which characterises his legislation, and raises it far above other religions and other philosophies.

While Christianity separates, and opposes to each other, the spirit and the flesh, the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of Cæsar, Judaism has never ceased to proclaim that God is the God of this world, and that He

ceases not to act, to create, and to manifest Himself in the vast Universe, which is His work. He incessantly teaches that man is created for this life, that is, in order to develop all his faculties, and to work for the amelioration and progress of the whole human race, by combining his powers and his intelligence with those of his fellow creatures, and by relying on the dictates of his conscience, his liberty, and his reason. It does not thence follow that Judaism ignores the eternal destiny of man ; but it regards him, so long as he lives his terrestrial life, as a link in the great chain of creation ; and it imposes on him the mission and the duty of aiding by all his means, and of consecrating all his efforts to the triumph of the good, the useful, and of the upright, for himself and for all his brethren.

This practical spirit distinguishes powerfully, and is the characteristic of Judaism amidst the mystical idealism of the religions of the East ; it is this also which distinguishes it from Christianity, since the latter transfers the true life of mortal man to a sphere beyond this world.

“The law which I command you this day,” says the divine legislator to the chosen people, “is not far from you ; it is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up to heaven for us, in order that we may know it and do it ? it is very nigh unto thee, in thy heart and in thy mind.” “See,” he adds, “I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil, the blessing and the curse ; choose life, that thou and thy seed may live.”* “The secret things are for God, but the revealed things are for us and our children for evermore.”† “Take heed unto yourselves, that ye observe and do all the commandments which I have commanded you this day, in order that you may live and multiply, and that you

* Deuteronomy xxx. 11 and foll.

† Ibid. xxix. 29.

may prolong your days on the land which you go to possess.”*

These precepts have been too frequently quoted in disparagement of Judaism, to render the assertion of their reality necessary. Yes, true it is that the Hebrew legislator's essential and principal aim was to define the fundamental rules of human rights and duties within the limits of this life ; that he does not generally dwell on the immortality of the soul ; and that he gives to this mysterious doctrine, whose nature exceeds the bounds of human intelligence, a secondary and less prominent position. Though the whole of the Bible breathes the doctrine of immortality—though the idea of eternity is everywhere present, even from the first days of creation—yet the sacred writer has avoided, on this point, a dogmatism which, without doubt, appeared to him useless and dangerous. He leaves this dark problem of a future life in the domain of the unknown, in the free sphere of human discussion ; his chief aim is to organise man for existence here, for family life, for society, for the work of a progress in which he is incessantly employed here below.

But is this terrestrial life to be absorbed in disgraceful materialism and abject sensuality ? No. The author of the Bible, while steering clear of the abstractions of mysticism, has carefully avoided the shoals of materialism. Man is to work for the things of this world, but he is to sublimate them, to glorify them by the ever present idea of God, by love of this eternal Providence, who daily lavisheth on him benefits, by the constant imitation of this good and merciful Father, who surroundeth all beings with infinite love. “ Say not in your hearts, my power and the strength of my hand hath gotten me this

* Deuteronomy viii. 1 ; vi. 17 ; v. 38.

wealth ; remember the Eternal thy God, for it is He who gives thee the power to acquire wealth.”*

“And the Lord God said to the congregation of the children of Israel, Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.”†

Thus spiritual life and physical life are not separated in the doctrine of Judaism. Man lives in eternity, but not for eternity ; he is an element of eternal life ; but so long as he dwells on this earth, so long as he is linked to the visible world, to the things of this world must he devote himself. Having a double nature, soul and body, he is not permitted to sacrifice the body to the ideal aspirations of the soul, any more than he is permitted to sacrifice the soul to the gross instincts of matter. His aim and his study ought to consist in combining the spirit and the flesh into a harmonious whole, in directing all the faculties, whether physical or moral, towards the divine idea, which is the good, the beautiful, and the true. And what is enjoined him as an individual is equally prescribed to him in a social point of view. Moses was the first who said, “Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word which is uttered by the mouth of God.”‡ Communities also do not live by means of material interest only ; they live by justice, by right, by truth, which have their foundation in God, and which are a permanent revelation of the Deity. They live as much by spirit as by matter, and they have no right to sacrifice the one to the other of these indissoluble elements of their existence and of their progressive development.

As is the individual man, so are communities created for this world ; this world is their stage, their sphere

* Deuteronomy viii. 17 & 18. † Leviticus xix. 2 ; xx. 7. & 26.

‡ Deuteronomy viii. 3.

of activity; they should devote themselves to the promotion of human progress—they are made for the living. Thence it follows necessarily that they cannot be guided by obscure theories of the immortality of the soul, of the rewards and punishments of a future life. No; they must be guided by positive laws, by human codes, by a material machinery which maintains order and unity in all the elements of the whole. Only, the principle of these laws is divine, their fundamental idea is divine; for where can we find, save in God, those resplendent axioms of right and duty, on which the whole edifice of human society reposes?

Such is the doctrine of Judaism. The Hebrew legislator, while constituting a closely united people, did not lead them astray into the abstract regions of mysticism; he was no dogmatiser on eternal life; he has imparted a powerful organisation to the principles and agents of terrestrial life; he has established them on the most solid, the most moral, and the truest basis: on the idea of God.

God is everywhere amid the Jewish people. He inspires, He ordains the minutest laws; in His name is all done, is all decreed. But this perpetual intervention of the Divinity—and this is a remarkable circumstance—in no way limits the liberty of man in the domain of earthly things. God inspires and reveals what is right, but He does not impose it. He leaves to man the choice of evil, in order that He may have the glory of preferring the good. “Sin is lying at thy door,” exclaims the Divine voice to Cain, “but thou canst overcome it.” Thus, according to the Hebrew doctrine, providence and liberty have a continuous conformity of action. God has granted to man the knowledge of good and of evil; He has revealed unto him the fundamental principles of truth; He has bestowed on him powerful

faculties, to be his guides here below, physical powers to resist the action of material evil, intellectual powers to resist the action of moral evil. It is the task of the human being to employ the elements of which he is composed with discernment, combined with the full exercise of his free will.

VI.

It will be easily understood that these broad and liberal doctrines, alike moral, religious and social, must have been the principle of truly universal ideas and virtues. In fact, no moralist, no legislator of ancient or modern times, has presented to us so lofty a conception, as the Bible, of love towards our fellow-men, respect for the rights of others, the sanctification of the family, the spirit of toleration and of fraternity. From the very first pages of Genesis, the creation of one only man—the work of God—establishes and declares the unity of the human race, the equality of the sons of Adam, and their original brotherhood. At a later time, the passions, the interests, the vices, or the chances of journeying on the earth, separate in vain one of these primitive brothers from the other. The Sacred Volume will unceasingly remind them that they are all in an equal degree creatures of God, and children of the First Father.

In this same Genesis, of which the narrative is so simple, so touching, and so sublime, the mysterious creation of woman proclaims the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage, while it constitutes family life, that is to say, society, of which it is the cradle and the type, as the necessary and natural condition of humanity. And, later still, what admirable consequences did the Jewish law derive from this original consanguinity,

this primordial unity of the human race. "Love thy neighbour as thyself," says Moses, thus raising the instinctive egotism of man, to the elevation of one of the greatest of social duties. "Love thy neighbour as thyself;" marvellous maxim! which comprehends at once the command to do unto others all the good that we desire to be done to us, and a prohibition from doing unto others what we do not desire to be done unto us.

Thence also are derived those precepts of benevolence and sympathy towards all the peoples of the earth; those pious exhortations to receive the stranger as a brother, to love him, and to act towards him in all relations of life as though he was one born among them. Thence those remarkable alleviations of all the barbarous practices of ancient society. While political considerations, the examination of which would here cause too long a digression, induced Moses to permit slavery, he mitigates its severity with the most touching solicitude. In the Hebrew legislation the slave is really only a servant, and the slightest violence offered to him by his master suffices to liberate him. Long before the French law, the Pentateuch declared every foreign slave to have the full right of freedom the moment he touched the soil of the Land of promise; to steal a free person and sell him as a slave, was a crime to be punished by death. No Hebrew was allowed to be a slave, "For, saith the Eternal, who delivered the sons of Jacob out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, the children of Israel can serve no other save me the Lord."

VII.

HAVE these universal aspirations and doctrines remained shut up in the narrow limits of Judea? And have they had no influence on the development of human society,

and on the progress of civilisation? Far from it. The world which, during the last eighteen hundred years, has relentlessly persecuted the Jews, only lives, breathes, moves and progresses by the ideas, the principles, and the inspirations of Judaism. Christianity was the form and the instrument by which ancient polytheistic society was subjected to the power of Jewish ideas. But Christianity did not originate them, but drew them forth by handfuls from the treasury of Israel, and disseminated them among the nations, by becoming their more or less faithful interpreter.

This is a truth which cannot be too openly advanced. Christianity has nothing in respect to fundamental principles, which does not equally belong to Judaism, save and except the formula of the compromise which it so cleverly established between Monotheism and a plurality of gods, between the absolute spiritualism of the Bible and pagan anthropomorphism.

In fact, at its birth, Christianity, in presence of strange nations, did not deny either its origin or its name. The apostles were proud of the name of Israelites, and boldly claimed it as their title of nobility. The disciples of Jesus introduced themselves to the Gentiles under the mantle of Israel, and pretended to be, equally with the Jews of Palestine, the sons of Abraham, and the inheritors of the promise. The Gospel, triumphing in the pagan world, was the summons of the Gentiles to Judaism, and was neither the sacrifice, nor the destruction of Judaism for the advantage of idolatry. This Judaism, it is true, separated itself from the ancient one in many respects, in order to facilitate the conversion of polytheists; but it has retained its denomination, and has ever had inscribed on its banner the glorious name of the God of Israel.

And when Christianity, at a later period, abandoning Judea and Jerusalem for the Rome of the Cæsars, became the conqueror over ancient society, and assumed the organisation and development which seemed unto it fit—when Christianity was no longer able to apply literally to the new religion the predictions of the prophets, the promises of the Holy Book, and the textual expressions of the Old Testament, it nevertheless preserved and combined them in its dogmatic phraseology, and was content to set them forth in symbols.

Thus, though the throne of David, Jerusalem and the nationality of Israel, were engulfed by the waves of Roman invasion, and have totally disappeared, the Christian Church maintains that they still exist, but transfigured, and raised to the dignity of a supernatural myth. The name of Israel has been symbolically given to the assembly of the faithful of the new creed; a heavenly Jerusalem has replaced, in the hopes of Christians, the earthly Jerusalem, which, according to the Jewish faith, is yet to become the centre of the moral world, and the throne of David has become idealised in the universal empire of Christianity. But whether symbol or reality, it is not the less true that the whole world has existed, subject to the influence of those ideas and words of essentially Jewish origin.

The entire domain of religion has in other ways been much influenced by Judaism. Christianity has made known to the world and everywhere taught those admirable Psalms, which pagans converted to Christianity, daily recite in their churches as the chief elements of their devotions. With the exception of the beautiful Lord's Prayer, the entire Christian ritual is borrowed from the books of the Old Testament. Zion and her songs ever resound amid the most imposing

ceremonials of Catholicism ; they closely connect modern times with the imperishable remembrance of the exodus from Egypt—*In exitu Israel de Egypto, domus Jacob de populo barbaro* (“When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a foreign people”). The names of the patriarchs, of Moses, of Aaron, and of the great Hebrew prophets, are everywhere cited amid the rites and the services of the Christian Church.

It is Judaism then, which lives and breathes under these strange forms ; forms that notwithstanding their discordant elements, have not succeeded in quenching the Israelitish idea, which is always militant, always active, amid principles apparently calculated to annihilate it.

Without Judaism, the Christian Church, the religious world erected on the ruins of Roman paganism, could not have maintained their existence until the present day. It is to Judaism, to it alone, that they owe their splendour, their power, and their universal dominion.

In the exclusive domains of morality and intelligence, the most decided progress of civilisation also results from Judaism. I shall demonstrate later, by irrefutable proofs, that all the moral doctrine that is most admired in the Gospel is quoted textually from the Pentateuch, or the Prophets, and that in this respect, the teachings of Jesus initiated nothing, invented nothing. Thus, all the morality which has raised modern legislation and modern society to so high a degree of civilisation, emanates, ever since the triumph of Christianity over Paganism, from the Decalogue and the Bible, corroborated, interpreted, and propagated by the Gospel.

“Love thy neighbour as thyself ; Do not avenge ; Love thou the stranger, for he is thy brother ; Do not unto others what you would not should be done unto you ; Defend, help, and protect the orphan, the

fatherless, and the widow"—all these holy maxims of charity, of brotherhood and of love, with which, since the Christian era, the writings of the moralists and sages as well as the codes of civilised nations abound—all these admirable precepts, I repeat, proceed from Judaism; and Christianity, which found them already proclaimed, had only to transmit them and teach them to the Pagans, who were surprised and charmed by a moral code to which they were not accustomed.

And what has not this glorious sacred literature, so different from all that the greatest geniuses of antiquity had dreamt, thought, or written, contributed to the elevation and expansion of human thought! All the intellectual movement of the Middle Ages and of modern times has been vivified by the inspiring breath of the Biblical writers. The study and the popularisation of the Psalms of the royal bard, the powerful imagery employed by the prophets to express their indignation and their hopes, have stamped with their profound impress the literature of the whole world.

The action of Judaism, or rather of the Bible, which expresses and epitomises Judaism, was not of less importance in civil society. The great social revolution of 1789 proceeds directly, though amid numerous incidents and political formulas, from the immortal principles of Sinai. It is easily to be understood that peoples, accustomed to see moral progress by the light of Christian doctrines only, have attributed to the Gospel the principles of this vast revolution. But what matters it? The equality of men before the law, at the bar of conscience and before God—the glorious victory of 1789, belongs to Judaism and to Judaism only, out of all antiquity. Modern societies are transformed under the empire of this re-conquered right; intolerance dis-

appears, and humanity marches towards that general peace, that universal harmony, that community of interest and of effort promised to the entire world by the voice of the Prophets.

I might develop these truths, of which I now only sketch the principal elements ; but time and space are alike wanting. Besides, what I have stated suffices to demonstrate that universal order in religion, in morality, in philosophy, in public law, is maintained and has progressed, during the last eighteen centuries, by means of the influence of Jewish ideas only, clothed in a Christian vestment, but even in their new form always visible and active.

VIII.

Now, is it not evident to every candid mind that society approximates day by day to the Jewish principle? Monotheism, taught to the Pagan world under the form of a Trinity, tends constantly, in modern forms of faith, to resume the primitive character by which it is defined in the Pentateuch. It has taken the world two thousand years to become familiar with this doctrine, for which it was not prepared at the period when it was taught it by the Christian apostles ; but at the present time, its acceptance is becoming daily more complete. Philosophy powerfully testifies to this great truth. The absolute Unity of God is its faith and its torch. And while this great change is being wrought in the minds of thinkers, the various religious systems themselves, while subjects of serious doubts, are divesting themselves more and more of the Roman paganism, to which, at the time of their birth, they were compelled to make concessions.

Yes, all in the region of ideas and facts tends towards the sublime doctrine of the Unity of God. Science itself brings its support to religion, by its progressive discoveries of the Unity of the Creator, in the unity of creation. Politics, in becoming tolerant and fraternal, contribute to this end also, by basing their laws and their actions on the glorious principle of the unity of the human race, whence results the equality of all men.

Thus the Unitarian belief, a belief essentially and exclusively Jewish, treasured up in Judaism itself, amidst its dispersions with an unconquerable courage, at the cost of persecution and martyrdom, enters equally into the working of social institutions, as it is the motto of the philosophy of the nineteenth century, and the breath of life, animating civilisation and urging it on towards its new destinies.

Judaism and modern society, thus drawing nearer to each other in this their common doctrine, approach each other still more closely in their future hopes. What is the hope of Judaism? What is this mysterious expectation, which has accompanied it from its origin, and which has enabled it to bear unflinchingly all the vicissitudes of its terrestrial wanderings?

Judaism believes in the advent of an epoch of universal peace and harmony, in which all men shall anew admit their brotherhood—in which weapons of destruction shall be turned into instruments of labour and of production—in which all human families shall be united in one common faith, in one and the same law, in the adoration of God the Only One—in which all shall have but one language and one heart.

The Jews designate this period of concord and of love, as the advent of the Messiah; but whatever be the name or the form, the characteristics of that blessed epoch are such

as have just been depicted ; they are written in indelible letters in the predictions of Moses, of the prophets and sages of Israel. Whether the Messianic mission be entrusted to a man divinely commissioned and inspired — to a glorious monarch, who will govern the world by justice and truth—or whether it will consist in a contemporaneous existence of institutions, of which the aim is to be peace and union among all men, the Messiah is not the less the unfailing hope and consolation of Israel.

Thus, what Judaism expects as a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy, is equally foreseen and expected by the peoples of modern times. What Israel terms a Messianic age the thinkers of our day call progress. But under these different denominations, it is really one and the same thing. Now this ancient Utopia of universal peace is no longer considered by serious minds as a dream of an excited imagination. Everywhere manners, laws, institutions tend to fusion ; and it is not without astonishment that, according to the Biblical prediction, “we see that the mountains shall be made low and the valleys shall be exalted, and the rough places shall be made a plain, to make a road for the Lord ;” that is to say, the most sublime expression of justice, love and truth.

And at the very time when I am writing these lines, a royal thinker, the exalted sovereign of the most glorious throne of the earth, has just uttered the formula of contemporaneous policy ; that great thought of general peace, which, from the earliest period of its history, has been the true end and aim of Israel’s mission. In fact, our modern civilisation tends to an ideal of equality, toleration, liberty, harmony, which are, according to the secular belief of Judaism, the essential attributes of the Messianic era.

How strange it is that other religions, which proclaim

that the Messianic-man, or God has already appeared, should still look forward to a second coming, which is to be the Messianic epoch! From the earliest times, Christian traditions have announced this second advent, which is to realise the prophetic promises. Another symptom, not less remarkable, is that Islamism, which feels itself gradually sinking into decadence, nevertheless feels a vague presentiment that the present century will not close without witnessing a great religious revolution. Throughout the entire domain of Mahomedanism, the appearance of the mysterious *Moul-sad* ("Lord of the hour") is looked for as near at hand.

What philosophers foresee, what Christians expect, and what Mussulmans announce, viz., Progress, or the second advent of the "Lord of the hour," is nothing but the embodiment of the faith that illumines Israel, promising the universal triumph of Monotheism, on that day, when, throughout the earth "God shall be One, and His name One."

And when it shall be universally acknowledged that God is One.

That He is a pure Spirit.

That He is invisible and immaterial.

That He acts in the created world, and that this world is His domain.

That any homage paid to sensible objects is a desecration of the idea of a Spiritual God.

And when the day shall come on which these truths shall be confessed and accepted, the world will have grasped the very essence of Judaism, not as regards its local and temporary form, nor its ancient traditional worship, but as respects what is transcendently pure and sublime.

THE DEICIDES.

PART THE FIRST.

FIRST BOOK.

State of Judea at the time of the birth of Jesus.—Struggle against the Romans.—Desire and hope for a Deliverer.—Signs by which this Deliverer was to be recognised.—Analysis of the Prophecies respecting the Messenger, and the Messianic Age.

I.

NEVER was a people better prepared to receive and to welcome a deliverer—never did a people feel more acutely the necessity of Divine help, than did the Jews of the period at which, according to the Gospel, Jesus Christ was born. The Hebrews had sustained a long and heroic conflict with the Roman empire. Seventy years before the birth of Jesus, and more than ninety before he began to preach, Jerusalem had been compelled, at the close of an obstinate defence, to open her gates to the triumphant legions of Pompey. This was the beginning of the great war, a war without precedent or example in the pages of history, a war destined to last throughout two centuries, amid perpetual revolts, numerous defeats, and marked by prodigies of valour

and devotedness, and having for its motive the most generous of causes,—national independence and liberty of conscience.

At the moment of Jesus's birth, Rome ruled Judea. The political institutions of the Hebrew people had succumbed to the laws of the conquerors, and to the centralising organisation of the Empire. The existence of the religious institutions was threatened by the introduction of heathen practices, either enforced by the proud rulers, or originated by ambitious apostates. The resistance of the Jews deepened and strengthened with their misfortunes, for they defended at once their country and their God. But they felt with desperation that, notwithstanding their courage and their constancy, they must eventually yield, sooner or later, to the united forces of the gigantic Empire of the Cæsars. Nearly two hundred years previously, they had broken the Macedonian yoke by the glorious sword of the Maccabees; but the Asmonean race was no more. Besides, Rome by its union, and by means of the heroism of its legions, was far more formidable than the Empire of Alexander, divided and torn as it was, after his death, into a thousand pieces by his rapacious generals. Greece was a State in its decline; the Roman Empire was in all its vigour. The struggle between Jerusalem and Rome might be indefinitely prolonged, but the issue was not doubtful.

Under these circumstances, any liberator was sure to be received with enthusiasm. Whoever might come in the name of God, to fulfil the promises of the prophets, to re-establish the throne of David, and to repulse with victorious arms the invaders of the soil and of the city of the Lord, could not fail to excite general transports of

delight, and to rally around him all the men and all the forces of Israel. The national and religious sentiments must infallibly concur in doubling the power of the Messiah and in ensuring the triumph of his mission.

Chiefs, magistrates, doctors, the masses of the populace, all were united in this respect, in one general impulse of patriotism and liberty. Judea was divided into numerous parties, but all these had but one aim, the defence of the laws, of the religion, and of the sacred soil ; and for this end, some desired to shake off the Roman yoke by force and to kindle everywhere a holy war ; while others counselled prudence and diplomacy ; these politicians, those openly revolutionary. Those powerful Pharisees, of whom the gospel traces so unfaithful a portrait, were generally partisans of open and desperate resistance ; to it they urged on the people, excited their passions against the Roman domination, and preached daily a war of independence.

Never, I repeat, did hearts beat better prepared, or more favourably disposed, to welcome him so frequently announced by the prophets, who, rekindling the quenched torch of David, was to break the yoke of the oppressor, to make Jerusalem the centre of the world, to reconduct all peoples to the Unity of God, and to re-establish over the whole earth, love, peace, and brotherhood.

Who, then, in Israel, at this moment of trouble and desolation, would have refused his acquiescence in this national and religious resurrection, in this work of universal regeneration ? Who would have desired to place an obstacle in the way of the triumph of the Jewish idea and of the realisation of those hopes, which had for several previous centuries supported, strengthened, and enlightened the chosen people, and had

prognosticated to them a glorious future amid all the families of the earth? Thus the hour was favourable, so favourable, that according to Josephus, a number of vulgar, ambitious, and clever impostors had profited by it, and that a considerable crowd of pseudo-messiahs and false prophets had arisen during this period. If clever intriguers could so mislead the people, by falsely declaring themselves messengers of the Eternal, how irresistible would have been the power of the real Messiah, when he at length should appear. The whole of Judea would infallibly have gathered around him, ready to applaud him, ready to raise him to the throne, ready to obey his voice.

Now, if this ardently desired liberty proceeded not from a mere man, but from God Himself, if that Providence which had never ceased to watch over the destinies of Israel, but deigned to intervene, in order to free the Hebrews from Roman despotism, as it had long before delivered them from Egypt and from the captivity of Babylon, why should the Jewish people, ever so easy to be convinced and influenced, have voluntarily closed their eyes to this miraculous manifestation, and have refused to adore the heavenly arm about to strike their enemies and to deliver Jerusalem? No! the Jews had no reason to reject the glorious destinies appointed to them, directly or indirectly, by their God; they had no reason not to recognise the Messiah, the son of David, as soon as he revealed himself; no reason, in a word, to resist the evidences of a fact which, when verified and accomplished, would, besides working their national liberation, invest them with the material and spiritual government of the whole world.

II.

WHY then, did they not see this Redeemer in Jesus Christ?

The Gospel will give us the answer, the Gospel, the sole documentary evidence remaining to us, testifying to the life, the words, and the acts of the son of Mary; for the silence observed by contemporary writers respecting this dramatic episode of Jewish history, clearly indicates that Jesus was confounded with the crowd of false Messiahs of which this period was so prolific, and produced, at first, no deeper impression and left no more visible traces of his passage, than did the other pretenders.

Thus, it is evident from the Gospel narrative, that Jesus did nothing, and desired to do nothing by which the Jews should recognise him; and that he never ceased to deny them the proofs which they asked of him with painful anxiety. The proofs demanded by the Hebrew people resulted from uniform prediction and numberless prophecies.

We do not pass judgment on these traditions and these prophecies as a philosopher, but as a historian; our aim is not, either to determine their character, or their authenticity, or to examine the strictures to which they have been subjected, under the influence of many passions and of various systems. We seek simply to verify the mental condition of Judea, at the period when Jesus lived there. We examine the popular beliefs of this epoch, in order better to understand the position assumed by the Jews towards him, who announced himself to them first, as the Messiah, and soon after, as God. What then, are to be the signs,

according to the belief of the Hebrew people, attending the Messianic age? * Among the supernatural events foretold, the Messiah predicted by the sacred writings was to be preceded by Elijah, the most popular and the most revered of the prophets among the Jews. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." †

The revelation of the new liberator was to be effected by means of one of those striking miracles which that God who manifested Himself of old amid the thunders of Sinai, who had sanctified Moses in the sight of all the people, had employed on every occasion in which the salvation of Israel was concerned. ‡

According to the natural order of events, the Messiah was to be a descendant of David and was to raise the throne of the prophet-king in Israel. He was to free the people of God from the foreign yoke, reunite the dispersed children of the chosen race, and attract all the nations of the earth to the dogma of the Unity, to change murderous weapons into implements of labour, and to inaugurate the reign of universal peace.

The Bible presents the most graphic picture of this period of fraternity and love, "when the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the leopard with the young kid, when all men shall have a heart of flesh, instead of one of stone, when all peoples shall have one tongue, shall adore the same God, and when Jerusalem shall be the sanctuary of all the nations of the earth."

"I have found David my servant; and with my holy oil have I anointed him, and with him my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him." §

* Malachi iii. and iv. *passim*.

† Malachi iv.

‡ Zechariah ii., xii. and xiv.

§ Ps. lxxxix. 20, 21.

“And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd. . . . And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be my servant for ever.”*

“But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.”†

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts: It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, to seek the Lord of hosts Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men out of all languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we know that God is with you.”‡

“And it shall come to pass, in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it, and many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall the law go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”§

* Ezekiel xxxvii. 24.

† Joel iii. 20.

‡ Zechariah viii. 20.

§ Isaiah xi.; Micah iv.

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and I will close up the breaches thereof, and I will rebuild it, as in the days of old, that Israel may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen who shall call upon my name, saith the Lord.”*

“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is revealed upon thee. And Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that the treasures of the Gentiles may enter, and their kings may be brought.”

“Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, I shall make thee so that no man shall go through thee; I will make thee an eternal intelligence, a joy of all generations.”†

“Behold the day is come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.”‡

“In that day, Jerusalem shall be called the House of Prayer for all nations.”§

“And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; and in that day the Lord shall be One, and His name One.”||

“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;

* Amos ix. 9.

† Jeremiah xxxiii. 14, 15.

‡ Zechariah xiv. 9.

† Isaiah lx.

§ Isaiah lvi. 7.

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nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."*

Such were the principal prophecies which, long previously, had announced the advent of the Messianic age to Israel and had characterised that epoch for which the Jewish people sighed amidst their misfortunes and their many captivities. From these prophecies, it is manifest that from the day on which this liberator should appear, all nations were to form but a single people, and that this people was to be Israel;† that there was thenceforth to be but one holy city, the centre of the world, the mistress of other cities, and that one was to be Jerusalem: one holy law was to govern the whole human race, the law of Moses; finally, all men were to worship but one only God, a Unity in His essence and His name, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews. Brotherhood, union and universal peace were to be the indications and the results of the advent of the King, Messiah, when, seated on the throne of David, He would rule with justice over all united peoples.

It is useless to investigate here, as did the apostles and

* Isaiah xi. 6 and 9; lxxv. 25.

† This is proved to demonstration, by the passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel, which declare that on the day of triumph "the doors of Jerusalem shall no more be opened unto the uncircumcised, or the unclean."—Isaiah x. 11; Ezekiel xlv. 9.

the fathers of the Christian church long after the teachings of Jesus, whether the words of the prophets had an entirely symbolical meaning, and were applicable to a wholly different order of ideas from that which they really set forth ; it is useless to examine whether "Jerusalem" signified a mystical city rather than the capital of Judea ; if by the throne of David was to be understood the spiritual domination of the church ; if the descendant of the Hebrew king was to be of his posterity in the flesh, or in the spirit, etc., etc. It is incontestable that all the Messianic predictions were accepted and interpreted by the Jews, contemporaries of Jesus, according to their natural and material sense ; Jerusalem itself, freed from its foreign masters, was to become the centre and the metropolis of the world. By human agency, and by material means, were the restoration of the kingdom of David and the legitimate descent of his son to be accomplished and confirmed. It suffices for us, in our duty as historian, that whether the result of reason, or blindness, such was the general mental condition of Judea. Every page of the Gospel, as it were, demonstrates this truth.

We have been compelled to restrict ourselves to the consideration of the general characteristics only of the the messianic herald and the messianic epoch. All accompanying data which the Christian system has added, do not exist in the sacred text, or are extracted from passages for the most part devoid of messianic ideas, and manifestly perverted from their true signification. It is difficult, even with the best will in the world, to discover in the writings of the Hebrew prophets the announcement of the divinity of Christ the redeemer ; we should seek in vain in their pages for any clear predic-

tion of his receiving life from a virgin, of his passion and his death for the moral purification of all the human race and for the wiping out of original sin, of his resurrection, and, above all, his consubstantiation, together with the holy Ghost, and with the One only invisible and infinite God. If the fathers of the Christian church, by means of excessive symbolism, could perceive these mysteries to be indicated in the prophetic books, in which, however, their expression is wholly imperceptible, it is certain that they were accepted by no one in Judea, that they resulted from no anterior tradition, and that they derived no support, either from the doctors of the Synagogue, or from popular belief.

Let us now examine in how far the predictions which we have cited were fulfilled in Jesus, and in how far he proved his divinity, or, at least, his messianic mission to that Hebrew people, whose every wish was directed to the advent of Christ, the Saviour.

SECOND BOOK.

John the Baptist.—Was he the Predicted Forerunner?—His Replies to his questioners.—His doubts as to the mission of Jesus.—Scene of the Transfiguration.—Miraculous conception of Jesus.—The Annunciation.—Joseph's dream.—The people's ignorance.—Birth of Jesus.—Accompanying Miracle.—The Magi.—Massacre of the Innocents.—Good Faith of the Jews.—Jesus was not the son of David.—Jesus and Emanuel.

I.

WE have seen, that according to the unanimous belief of the Synagogue, the Messiah was to be preceded by the miraculous appearance of the prophet Elijah.*

The Gospel also proclaims a forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist, preaching in the desert,† and declaring

* In fact, this is admitted by the Evangelists :—"Et interrogaverunt eum discipuli dicentes : Quid ergo scribæ dicunt quod Elias oporteat primum venire? At ille respondens ait eis : Elias quidem venturus est et restituet omnia." The Gospel according to St. Matthew xvii. 10-11.

† The episode of John the Baptist at once shows the erroneous exegesis adopted by the Evangelists, and the alterations to which they subjected the Biblical text, in order to make it correspond with the events of the life of Jesus :—"For this was He that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, 'The voice of One crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord,' " etc. (Matthew iii.). Here, then, is a considerable error in translation ; the text really says : "The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord ; make straight in the desert a highway for our God,' " Isaiah xl. 3. The connection of the two portions of the verse clearly indicates the true signification.

that the kingdom of Heaven was near, and who, baptising in the waters of Jordan, announced, that "he who was to come after him, would be much greater than he, and would baptise with the holy Ghost and with fire."*

The people hurriedly crowded around this fiery preacher of the wilderness, who clothed in the skin of goats, and a leathern girdle around his waist, fed only on locusts and wild honey.

Anxious to discover all the signs of approaching deliverance, the Jews were disposed to see in him the herald of whom the prophets spoke.

When at a later period, the editors of the Gospel sought to invest the mission of Jesus with a prophetic basis, they unhesitatingly declared John the Baptist to be Elijah, arisen from the dead. They affirmed that in him the prophecy of Malachi was fulfilled. In the Synoptic, is also found as attributed to Jesus, an explicit declaration on this very essential point of contemporaneous popular belief—

"Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, and if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. *Ipse est Elias qui venturus est.*"

But John the Baptist was far from accepting the part ascribed to him; in fact, on the rumour of his preaching, the Jews of Jerusalem caused him to be interrogated. Who art thou? asked those sent. Art thou the Messiah? John replies and confesses that he is not the Christ. And they ask him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith: I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answers, No. Then say they unto him: Who

* "And saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matthew iii. 2, 3, etc.; Matthew xi. 14.

art thou ? that we may give an answer unto them that sent us. He saith : I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent, were of the Pharisees, and they asked him and said unto him : Why baptisest thou then if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet ? And John answered them, saying : I baptise with water, *but there standeth one among you whom ye know not ;* this is he of whom I said, "After me cometh a man which is preferred before me ; for he was before me."*

This curious official report of the examination of John the Baptist occurs in the Gospel of St. John, and we see that the former emphatically denied his title of herald. How was it possible then, that in face of these declarations, the people, pontiffs, and priests could recognise in him the prophet Elijah, who was to precede the Messiah ?

Besides, this John the Baptist, who, according to all the Evangelists, proclaimed the divinity and the mission of Jesus, was apparently himself not free from doubts on this head. Imprisoned by the order of Herod, he heard of the miracles already performed by the son of Mary, and he sent two of his disciples asking him : Art thou he that should come, or should we look for another ?† Thus John denied his own mission, and doubted that of Jesus. Could the Hebrews evince more credulity than he did himself ?

Moreover, the doubts and contradictions pervading the Gospel narrations are a strange feature of all relating to this forerunner.

* St. John i. 19-27.

† Matthew ii. 1, 2, 3.

Though he made so uncompromising a declaration in the passage just quoted respecting the character and the mission of John the Baptist, Jesus is much less positive on another occasion.

"Elijah is already come," said he one day to his disciples, "and if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was to come."* How is this *incognito* of the expected prophet to be reconciled with the previous declaration that Elijah and John were one and the same. Besides, the ignorance of John the Baptist respecting his own prophetic character, renders the scepticism of the Jews, a circumstance of no moment, since when interrogating the pretended prophet, they received from his own mouth such direct denials.

But there is yet more to be said. Every one is familiar with the scene of the transfiguration, in which Jesus, accompanied only by Peter, James, and John, conducts them to the summit of a high mountain, where they suddenly behold him, his countenance luminous as the sun, his person enveloped in a garment as white as snow, in converse with Moses and the prophet Elijah!

This scene was manifestly set forth with the sole object of imparting a new historical basis to the mission of Jesus; but whatever may have been the intention of the framers of this supernatural narrative, if according to it we believe Elijah appeared then for the first time, how can we admit that he had previously revealed himself under the semblance of John the Baptist?

Yet for a people so prone to credit the marvellous as were the Hebrews, the knowledge of this splendid transfiguration, verified by the presence of Moses and Elijah, would surely have been of a character to put an end to

* Matthew xi. 14.

all hesitation ; the most incredulous prostrating themselves with their faces to the earth, would unanimously have acknowledged him to be the Christ. Having Peter's natural caution, they would have desired, as he did, to erect three tabernacles on this sacred mount, one to Jesus, one to Moses, and one to Elijah the Prophet.

But the Master of the Evangelists, not only selected but three of his disciples to be witnesses of this revelation, he also forbade them to tell the vision to any man till after his death. "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying : 'Tell the vision to no man, until the son of man be risen again from the dead.' " *

Thus the Jews, notwithstanding all their honest inquiries, could not confirm the truth of the alleged advent of the forerunner prophet. They were not aware of the miraculous transfiguration on mount Thabor ; they were wholly ignorant of the appearance of Elijah and Moses, and hence in the history of Jesus, and in his intercourse with the people and the chiefs of Israel, the very first essential condition was wanting, which was to indicate the inauguration of the messianic epoch.

Let us now see whether the Christ revealed himself more clearly than Elijah the Prophet had done.

II.

All the miraculous circumstances which are connected with the birth of Jesus Christ constitute the most legendary portion of the life of the great Reformer. We find these legends especially mentioned in the Gospel according to St. Luke, which may be termed the Gospel

* Matthew xvii. 9.

of fables. Matthew and Mark are much more reserved with respect to marvellous narrations. They state that Joseph received the revelation of the Divine nature of the son of whom Mary was about to become the mother, merely in a dream, and not by supernatural appearances, or by the apparition of angels. Criticism cannot hesitate which to choose, whether their narrative, or that of Luke. According to Matthew and Mark, the birth of Jesus was unaccompanied by any public revelation of his divinity; the Hebrew people knew not that the Messiah was about to appear, that God was to be incarnated, was to be born, to live, to suffer, and to die for the salvation of the whole human race. Matthew and Mark, writing more nearly contemporaneously with Jesus, well understood how difficult it would be to induce the witnesses of his life, to admit the historical truth of pretended miracles, which had not been produced by any visible phenomenon. Luke was less cautious; he imparted extraordinary development to the legendary passages of Christ's biography. The method which we have adopted obliges us to set forth this mythical portion, and to examine whether, even had they accepted it, the Jews of that period could have become convinced of the truth of the Christian dogma by the supernatural occurrences which it connects with the birth of Jesus.

These mysteries, which perplex the senses, and surpass human intelligence, are too suggestive of mythological records, not to owe their rise to the period when early Christianity approached the heathen world. Let us, however, examine them in the literal text only.

According to the Gospels, then, God disdained not to render a simple mortal a mother, and the Holy Ghost to impregnate a virgin, the blessed among women. St.

Luke says, that the angel Gabriel was sent by God to the virgin Mary, then the betrothed of an inhabitant of Nazareth, called Joseph ; he announced to her that a son would be born unto her by the interposition of the Holy Ghost, and by virtue of the Most High, and that this son, holy among the holiest, would be called the *Son of God*. The Eternal would bestow on him the sceptre of David, and perpetual dominion over the house of Jacob. Mary resigned, replied to this mysterious prediction : “ I am the servant of the Lord ; let Him do with me according to His will.” And the heavenly messenger departed.*

* “ And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David ; and the virgin’s name *was* Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail ! *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee : blessed *art* thou among women ! And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary ; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David : and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man ? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she has also conceived a son in ^{her} old age : and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.” Luke i. 28 and 29.

But this divine annunciation, thus miraculously made to the chosen Virgin, was concealed by her within the most secret recesses of her soul. No one knew it, not even her husband. In fact, it is related in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, that Joseph having discovered the condition of his wife before their union, and not wishing to bring her before the tribunal, resolved merely to send her back to her parents. If Mary had informed him of the divine message she had received, he could not have formed a resolution, which notwithstanding the tenderness of his sentiments, would nevertheless have been a discreditable infliction for his young wife. Happily, while pondering over this intention, he had a *dream*, in which an angel said to him, "Fear thou not, Joseph, to receive Mary as thy wife, for the child which she bears, is of the Holy Ghost." And Joseph awoke henceforth convinced, and did according to the word of the Lord.*

But he did not reveal these extraordinary circumstances, any more than Mary had done. No one among the Jews was aware of this miraculous conception. In fact, when the son of Mary, having reached the age of manhood, began his discourses, the Jews who heard and admired him, the people of his own district were constantly exclaiming, "Whence has he derived this wisdom? Is he not the son of the carpenter? Is not his mother's name Mary? And are not his brothers named James, Joseph, Simon and Jude?"† Now, if the people of Galilee had been acquainted with the legends concerning his birth, how could they have felt surprised at these wonderful qualities and this intellectual power in the son of God?

* Matthew i. 19, 20—23.

† Matthew xiii. 54, 55.

III.

THE physical birth of Jesus was unmarked in the sight of the general public, by any more solemnity and splendour than the conception of him had been. Joseph, leaving Nazareth, went to Bethelam accompanied by his wife, in order to have his name registered, in obedience to an edict proclaimed by Cæsar for the numbering of the population. On her arrival in that town, Mary felt her delivery approaching, and she gave birth to a child, which she had to place in a manger, because none of the hostelries could afford her accommodation. Nothing happened to announce to the inhabitants and population of Bethlehem and Judea that a Messiah had just been born.*

Certain Evangelists, cotemporaries of the birth of Jesus, record two miraculous events. At the moment of his divine birth, to some shepherds who were passing the night in the field, there suddenly appeared an angel of the Lord, and they were surrounded by a divine light. "And the angel said unto them, Fear nought, for behold I bring you good tidings, of great joy, which shall be unto all people ; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you ; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger." "And suddenly," adds the Evangelist St. Luke, who alone speaks of this vision, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill towards men."†

* The fact of the registering is far from being proved ; but this does not affect the narrative.

† Luke ii. 1—14.

This divine light, these angels and heavenly host proclaiming the advent of Christ the Saviour, and singing the praises of God and the greatness of the young Messiah, formed a resplendent revelation, according with the ancient traditions and the simple faith of Israel. But this revelation, granted as a particular favour to obscure shepherds, was refused to the masses of the Hebrew people. No one at Bethlehem besides these country shepherds, was witness of this divine revelation, of which Luke alone, always carried away by his legendary system, has preserved the narrative.

The second fact is related in St. Matthew ; it is the arrival of the Eastern Magi at Jerusalem. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews ?" say the wise men, according to this Evangelist, "for we have seen his star in the East, and we have come to worship him." These words having reached the ears of Herod made a deep impression on him, and with him on all the city. He called all the Priests and Scribes around him and asked them at what place the Christ was to be born. They reply, at Bethlehem. Then Herod summons the Magi around him and questions from them of the moment at which the revealing star appeared to them ; then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying thus unto them, "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again that I may come and worship him also." The Magi retired, preceded by the star which they had seen in the East, till it came and stood over where the divine child was, "and when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."

But after this act of adoration, they did not return to Herod and publicly proclaim the birth of Christ, but departed into their own country by another way. "Herod," says the Evangelist, "when he saw he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children in Bethlehem."*

Contemporary history furnishes us with no trace, among the numerous acts of cruelty imputed to Herod, of this massacre of the innocents. But whatever may be thought on this subject, certain it is that the Jewish people saw not the light at the period of the journey of the Eastern Magi, any more than they beheld the apparition of the heavenly angels to the shepherds. This vision of the pastors took place in the middle of the night, without witnesses; the Magi after having worshipped in Jesus Christ the King of the Jews, fled away without saying one word to anyone, and thus refused their solemn and public testimony in support of his divinity. How then was it possible, that the Hebrews, at a later period, could believe in events of which they had not been witnesses, of which no proof was given them, and of which, according to the gospel narrative itself, from motives which it is not our province to investigate, the knowledge even was concealed from them?

Let us remark an additional circumstance relative to the birth of Jesus, which, according to the system of the Evangelists, was calculated to interfere with the confirmation and the success of his mission in the midst of Israel.

The Messiah was, according to all the prophecies, to be a descendant of David; now the descent from Joseph was far from being clearly established in the opinion

* Matt. ii. 1—18.

of the Hebrews. Nothing pertaining either to the carpenter of Nazareth, or to Mary, publicly indicated and corroborated a royal origin ; and the genealogies contained in the several gospels present too many important discrepancies amongst themselves, to render the admission of their authenticity possible.

But the question was decided by a fact rendered otherwise important. As soon as Jesus declared himself to be the son of God, as a divine verb, incarnate in a human body, as soon as his biographers asserted that he had been miraculously conceived by means of the Holy Ghost, even before the union of Mary and Joseph, the royal genealogy which had been more or less proved, became, it is manifest, a matter of entire insignificance. In the eyes of the Jewish people, who are represented by their adversaries, as being servilely attached to the letter of their traditions, Jesus could no longer be held to be a descendant of David, and to him the words of prophecy were no longer applicable. We shall see, indeed, that the Jews who received him most favorably as a prophet, at a later period violently opposed him, the moment he disturbed their belief in all their traditions and in the whole system of prophetic promises, by his assumption of the title of son of God, and by the assertion that he was God Himself.

Thus, the Gospel relies less, in proof of the miraculous birth of Jesus, on the prediction of his descent from the house of David, than on other prophecies. After the narrative of the conception of the Son of God in the womb of a virgin, and the annunciation of the birth of a child who would be called Jesus, it adds :—"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, saying, ' Behold, a virgin

shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.'” Et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum. Hoc autem totum factum est ut adimpleretur quod dictum est à Domino per prophetam, dicentem :—Ecce virgo in utero habebit et pariet filium et vocabunt nomen ejus Emmanuel.*

It was difficult for the Jews, who are accused of being fanatic adorers of the letter, to consent, with the best will in the world, to recognise in him revealing himself under the name of Jesus, the deliverer announced by Isaiah, under the name of Emmanuel, though early Christianity, by means of its mystic symbolism, succeeded later in discovering an analogy between these two names. Let us here state the fact, that it is not astonishing this analogy was not discovered by the material eyes and intellects of Jesus's contemporaries.

Thus, if we admit the authenticity of the Gospel nar-

* Matt. i. 22 & 23. Let us here remark that the word עַלְמָה employed by Isaiah in the passage quoted above, signifies ‘young woman’, at least equally with ‘virgin’. The same word is found in the Cantic, clearly used to denote the women of Solomon’s harem. However, this passage of Isaiah, like so many others, has been strangely wrested from its real signification. The prophet who addresses the King Ahaz, adds that, Before the promised child Emmanuel shall know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings † And he went unto the prophetess, and she conceived, and bare a son, and before the child shall have knowledge to cry, “‘ My father and my mother,’ the riches of Damascus, and the spoils of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.” ‡ Thus the prediction of the prophet referred, evidently, to an event, not of the Messianic, but of a contemporary period.

† Isaiah ix. 19.

‡ Isaiah viii. 3.

native, it is yet indisputable that all the circumstances by which, at a time when the marvellous played so important a part, the divinity of Jesus at the moment of his appearance on earth, could have been demonstrated, must have been wholly unknown to the Jewish people. Can they, then, be blamed if, when later the mysteries of the incarnation and of virginal maternity were proclaimed to them, they refused to believe ?

We ask pardon of our readers for having so long dwelt on this manifestly legendary matter of the birth of Jesus. Christianity appeals to us against the scepticism of the Jews ; its examination was therefore indispensable.

THIRD BOOK.

Childhood of Jesus.—His brothers and sisters.—Family life.—The child Jesus at Jerusalem.—Baptism of Jesus.—Miracles of the time of Moses.—First sermons of Jesus.—The admiration that he excited.—His respect for the law of Moses.—His departure from Nazareth.—The miracles of Jesus.—Miracles in respect of faith and of science.—Authority of miracles in Hebrew dogma.—Legend of Rabbi Eliezer.—Prophets and Thaumaturges.—Jesus as prophet.

I.

JESUS grew up. His childhood and youth passed without the attention of his contemporaries being attracted by anything marvellous or extraordinary; he was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth; as firstborn he was redeemed; and at the expiration of thirty-three days, according to the laws of Moses, his mother fulfilled the ceremony of purification, and offered the peace offering prescribed by the sacred code, at the Temple of Jerusalem. Finally, after having observed all the ordinances of the Jewish law, Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth in Galilee, where, says the Gospel, "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."*

Joseph and Mary had moreover, several other children, sons and daughters, who are referred to more than once in the Gospel, some of them being mentioned by their names—Joseph, Simon, and Jude. Jesus was brought up amidst his brothers and sisters, and this simple and uneventful family-life, resembling that of the

* Luke ii. 21—24.

most humble inhabitants of Galilee, was evidently devoid in the eyes of those who witnessed it, of any idea of divinity. Who could suspect there dwelt an immaculate Virgin, one remaining a virgin after childbirth, in the person of this beautiful and radiant mother, surrounded by her numerous progeny? Who, indeed, could possibly suspect the presence of the son of God himself, miraculously conceived and begotten, in that fair and graceful child, playing with his brothers, and learning from his pious parents, respect for the Jewish law and for the first principles of religion, morality, and virtue.*

Besides, this entire period of the life of Jesus is involved in complete obscurity, and this proves that it was not marked by any event of a nature to establish the divine character of his mission. One incident only of his youth, is related by his biographer. He was twelve years of age, his father and mother had gone, according to custom, to Jerusalem, to celebrate the Passover; on their way back to Galilee, they perceived that Jesus was not with them, they uneasily retraced their steps, and after three days' anxious search, they found him in the Temple, seated among the doctors, listening to them, and interrogating them with a wisdom that filled all present with admiration. "My son," said his Mother, "why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." And he said unto them, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" "But," adds the Evangelist, "they understood not the saying

* Matt. xi. 46, and xiii. 55—56. Some assume these were only cousins of Jesus, but the text is clear. It says, "Brothers," ἀδελφοί, *fratres*, and leaves no room for doubt.

which he spake unto them.”* Strange contradiction of the historian. For, after the Angel’s revelation, received by Mary before her conception, and by Joseph during sleep, the meaning of the words ought to have been perfectly clear to them. At all events, what they did not comprehend themselves, must have been yet more unintelligible to those present. They reconducted their son to Nazareth, where, adds the Gospel, “he was subject unto them, *erat subditus illis*.” Then nothing more is heard of Jesus or his family, until the time when the son of Mary, having attained to manhood, suddenly appeared before Jewish society, proclaimed his ideas of reform, and began the glowing orations which were destined, ere long, to lead to his condemnation and his death.

II.

The first act by which he manifested himself was his baptism. We have seen that John preached repentance and the remission of sin, on the banks of the Jordan, and that the people flocked to him in crowds, in order to be baptised in the waters of the river. Jesus also went from Galilee to the Jordan, to receive baptism from the hands of John; but John forbade him, saying, “I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?” And Jesus answering, said unto him, “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”† John, convinced, performed the sacred rite and Jesus, baptised by the fiery preacher of the desert, went up straight away out of the water.

* Luke ii. 41—50: Et ipsi non intellexerunt verbum quod locutus est ad eos.

† Matthew iii. 13—15.

Suddenly, says the Gospel, ensued a striking revelation ; “ the Heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him : and lo ! a voice from heaven saying, ‘ This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.’ ”*

How then was it possible that the immense crowd that thronged the banks of the Jordan could have remained unmoved in the presence of this startling phenomenon ? Here was almost a repetition of the sublime scene of Sinai, the skies opening, the divine voice resounding through space. Nothing could have prevented the people, who believed so unanimously in the revelation of Mount Horeb, from once more yielding to the evidence of their senses, and immediately prostrating themselves at the feet of him whom God himself had proclaimed to be “ His well-beloved Son.”

The cause of this indifference is simply this ; the pretended miracle, according to the Gospel itself, was not visible to the Hebrews ; not one among the numerous witnesses of the baptism of Jesus, saw either the skies open, or the divine Spirit descend, under the form of a dove ; nor did one person hear the divine voice, causing measureless space to tremble. To Jesus alone was this miracle revealed ; his eyes only were permitted to behold these heavenly phenomena. The Gospel narrative admits not of a doubt on this point. “ Jesus came out of the water,” saith St. Matthew, “ and the Heavens were opened to HIM, and HE saw the Spirit of God descending upon HIM, and lighting upon HIM in the semblance of a dove.”*

* Confestim ascendit de aquâ, et ecce aperti sunt *ei* coeli, et *vidit* Spiritum Dei descendentem sicut columbam et venientem *super se*.—Matthew iii. 16, 17.

The manner in which St. John relates the same fact further lessens the importance of this vision. According to this Evangelist, it was not Jesus who saw the skies open and the Spirit descend under the form of a dove. It was John the Baptist, to whom these revealing signs were vouchsafed. John, says he, bore testimony in these terms :—"I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not : but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, ' Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.' And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."*

Whichever of these two versions be adopted, it remains none the less clearly proved, that the divine manifestation occurred solely, either for John the Baptist, or for Jesus, even if its reality is fully admitted, instead of its being imputed to the symbolism of some inward revelation. The people who had gathered in crowds on the banks of the Jordan, had neither any knowledge, nor any suspicion of the occurrence.

John the Baptist himself appears to have attached little importance to this pretended revelation ; for, as we have seen, long after the incident of the baptism, and when in his dungeon, he expressed the most significant doubts and caused Jesus to be interrogated as to whether he was really the Christ, or whether another was to be expected.

* Et testimonium pertribuit Joannes, dicens : " Quia *vidi* Spiritum descendentem quasi columbam de cœlo et mansit super eum. Et *ego nesciebam* eum ; sed qui misit me baptizare in aquâ ille mihi dixit :—" Super quem videris Spiritum sanctum descendentem et manentem super eum, hic est qui baptizat in Spiritu sancto.' Et ego vidi et testimonium pertribui quia hic est Filius Dei."—John i. 32—34.

From the earliest days of their history, the Hebrew people had not been accustomed to this mystery, this divine incognito. Even before the occurrence of the celestial miracles, which were regarded by them as striking evidences of the intervention of the Almighty, they were warned of their imminence and of their supernatural significance. "Fear ye not," said Moses to the people on the shores of the Red Sea, "for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. And a moment after the waters returned and overwhelmed the Egyptians amid their raging billows."* "Sanctify yourselves," spoke the great legislator of Israel, with deep emotion,† to the people assembled at the foot of the flashing mountain of Sinai, "Sanctify yourselves, purify yourselves, body and soul, for in three days ye will hear the voice of the Eternal God proclaiming His everlasting truths unto the earth." "And it came to pass on the third day, that Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke," and amid the conflict of the elements Israel heard the resounding voice proclaim the immortal code of the future, the indestructible law of humanity, the DECALOGUE. And when afterwards, Moses exhorted the chosen people perpetually to observe these sacred laws, he could say without fear of contradiction, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly, in the Mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the darkness, with a great voice, and he added no more."‡ "Your eyes have seen, your ears have heard, all that the Lord hath done for you, from your departure out of Egypt until now."§

Science may seek to explain these miracles, but it is

* Exodus xiv. 13—14.

† Ibid. xix. 10, etc.

‡ Deut. v. 22.

§ Deut. xxix. 2.

the province of history to state the indelible impression produced by them, on the people who witnessed them. Never was a doubt raised in Israel as to the divinity of the Sinaic revelation. The Jews of the time of Jesus, impatient as they were to hail the advent of the Messiah, watchful for every sign that could reveal his presence, would have bounded with joy and hope, could they have known the supernatural events which, according to his biographers, had marked the baptism of Christ. This proof was denied them, and they continued to see in Jesus only a man of wisdom superior to that possessed by the masses, it is true, but not a God, nor even a "son of God."*

III.

Yet the hour had come ; his ideas and his great designs had been long matured in his soul.†

He began his predications, gathered to himself several devoted disciples, and traversed the towns of Judea,

* This title, "son of God," is often employed in the Bible without any idea of its attributing *Divinity* to him to whom it is applied. In the Psalms, David is frequently called the "son of God." In exaggerated metaphorical language, to God is given this expression, "this day I have begotten thee ;" but David, in consequence of that figure, never proclaimed himself, or was declared "*God*." The epithet of God, which is synonymous with the adjective "divine," is again and again employed in the Bible to express superiority. The mountain of God is said, to indicate a very high mountain ; the wind of God, a violent wind ; man of God, son of God, a man of intelligence, who appears to be inspired by God Himself. Jesus, therefore, might have been denominated the "son of God" without offending the ears, the consciences, or the traditions of Israel. But we shall perceive later that his disciples and even he himself, attached to this designation the real conception of a divine origin and essence.

† See also Paralipomènes, Book viii. 6.

denouncing the chiefs of the nation and insisting on the necessity of great moral and social reforms.

When listening to him, the first sentiment of the people was one of admiration ; in his words breathed the inspiration and the expression of the great days of prophecy. His sermon on the mount* is still a model of the loftiest precepts of morality, charity and virtue. Under a new form, it sums up all that is purest and loftiest in the sacred books of Israel. In it, Jesus exhibits himself as one of the greatest moralists of ancient or modern times ; but above all, he therein shows himself to be a faithful follower of the law delivered to the Hebrews. He calls upon man to respect the ordinances of the sacred Code ; he severely reprimands those of the chiefs or people who have forsaken the principles of the law of God ; but he does not intimate that anything admits of change, either in the text, or in the spirit of that legislation which had governed Israel since the time of Moses. "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."† The Jews perceived anew in these declarations, the permanent teachings of the great doctors of Israel ; they listened attentively to the new Rabbi, and everywhere greeted him with this revered title.

But the dawning reputation of Jesus produced no

* Matt. v. to vii. We shall examine further on, this beautiful sermon with all the interest it deserves.

† Matt. v. 17—19.

deep impression even in his own country: the inhabitants of Nazareth who were intimately acquainted with his family and his antecedents, were not greatly disposed to see a prophet, much less a God, in the carpenter's son, who had passed his childhood and youth among them without any remarkable incidents. They were for the most part sceptical as to his pretended mission and his supernatural virtues and were shocked, even at his claim to the gift of prophecy. So Jesus soon left Nazareth, saying "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and in his own house." "And," adds the Gospel, "he did not many mighty things there, because of their unbelief."* Yet his renown increased and extended. He performed miracles; it was said that above all, he cured the sick and exorcised those who were possessed. A great number of wonderful facts were related on this subject, which attracted around him a crowd of diseased persons, who hoped to obtain speedy relief. It is important to describe here, the species of influence that the possession of such miraculous power as that ascribed to Jesus by the Gospel, was likely to exercise over the imagination, or on the belief of such a people.

IV.

IF religious faith accepts, can history and philosophy admit with equal facility, the truth of the miracles with which the Gospel teems and which, in the eyes of the Christians, have ever presented a striking proof of the divinity of Jesus?

Here a question arises. It concerns the important problem of the supernatural in the history of humanity.

* Matt. xiii. 54—58; Mark vi. 4.

In furtherance of a great moral revelation, with the aim of enlightening or saving peoples, doth God disturb the fundamental laws of nature? Doth He suddenly modify that universal order which His creative power has subjected to constant and immutable laws, in accordance with events occurring on our insignificant planet? Did He stop the course of the sun, and interrupt the regular motion of the planets, in order to permit Joshua to vanquish the Amorites? Did He divide the waters of the Red Sea and did He open up a deep path between two watery walls, where the Israelites passed over on dry ground? Did He also grant unto certain prophets, the power of modifying the laws of nature, of reviving the dead, and throwing the elements into disorder? Did He permit them to control the winds and the thunder, and to be the agents and the ministers of His will upon earth? Important questions, which sceptical science solves by a bold denial, but which pious faith scarcely dares to discuss. To range oneself under the banner of science, or with blind faith, to admit what is impossible, what is absurd, and believe that the less a matter can be understood, the more divine is its character, exposes us to equal difficulty, equal danger. There are in this problem, such mysterious abysses, that human reason is overwhelmed and lost. The miraculous is around us, is within us, and habit alone has rendered it familiar to us. Creation, birth, life and death, movement, the variety of beings, thought and its productions, physical force and its results, liberty, reason, conscience, causes and effects are so many miracles which are daily in action around us and in which dwells infinite and undefinable power, incomprehensible alike in its essence and its operations.

Is it then possible to assign limits to the power of Him, whom in our feeble language we call God, to this Cause of all causes, the Former of all which our eyes behold? Can He not undo that which He hath done? Can He not suspend and stop the universal movement, which He alone hath originated? Are special miracles impossible to Him, from whom emanates the grand miracle of the universe and of life? Who dares to assert this? Here the human mind finds itself placed on the terrible brink of the bottomless gulf called the Infinite; and its weakness and its imperfections must ever render the solution of the problem impossible. The Infinite alone can comprehend the Infinite. Thus, to deny the miraculous on the ground of our limited reason and our impotent philosophy, would be but pride and rashness.

V.

SCIENCE, it is true, correctly observes that miracles which are irreconcilable with the dark mystery of creation, have become more and more rare in proportion as human intelligence has advanced. Primitive peoples explained all that they did not understand as a miracle; progress in science has given the key to numerous phenomena, formerly considered as divine manifestations, and they no longer cause surprise to the narrowest intelligence. Science has not driven God out of the Universe, but it has cleared up many points which were inexplicable to the ignorance of the earliest ages. It has elevated the conception of the Divinity, inasmuch as His sacred name is no longer associated with the most trifling incidents of national and individual life; and by

circumscribing the action of His infinite Providence, to the universal harmony and the eternal development of beings, and worlds.

The learned add that in ancient times, no miracle was ever confirmed by authentic and narrow mathematical proofs. It owed its authority far more to popular credulity, than to its clearness. Even in our time, how many facts pass for miraculous which, when subjected to close scientific investigation, appear to be only natural phenomena. Unless indeed they are juggling tricks, used to take advantage of the childlike belief of the masses, or to promote the interest of religious comedians.

In this age of ours, so little prone as it is to acceptance of the marvellous, if a man pretended to be sent by God and to be endued with the power of working miracles, the Academy of Sciences would call him before their bar, would compel him to give an account of his *modus operandi*, and would subject his wonder-working to so severe a scientific investigation, that doubt would no longer be possible. Cagliostro, and more recently Home, pretended to perform in the world of Spirits wonders wholly different from those, of which the sacred writings impute the power to the prophets and men of God. Our sceptical society looked upon them only as skilful quacks, not seers or Demi-Gods; they were amused at their mysterious experiments, and did not honour them by opposition or discussion.

VI.

OF what avail would it be to us, to decide between science, that derides, and faith that affirms. We should

only contribute a new hypothesis, admitting of no possible demonstration, in a matter which refers to the inscrutable relation between the Finite and the Infinite; between the creatures and the Creator, between the world and God. The wisest course is to abstain from discussing this point. Leave those who believe in the enjoyment of their faith, and their doubts to those who doubt: let it suffice unto us, to adore that incomprehensible Being, the inexplicable principle of all souls and of all bodies, the beneficent God, the Eternal Fountain of all good, of all beauty and of all truth, the ideal of justice and of love, whom the human race approaches day by day, on the wonderful path of which each step is progress.

Besides, this vain investigation is useless in reference to the subject with which we are occupied: for it could lead to no certain result.

The Hebrews believed in miracles; their historical books and their traditions teem with supernatural events. To ascertain what meaning and what character they imputed to the wonders wrought before their eyes, is the only important point. Was Thaumaturgy, according to the principles of Judaism and the doctrines of the synagogue, a proof of divinity? Did the true or pretended miracles attributed to Jesus by his biographers, necessarily reveal him as a God, to his cotemporaries? This is the only interesting point of the investigation in which we are engaged.

VII.

As regards the marvellous, the Jewish doctrine is as simple as it is profound.

The Jews admitted the miraculous, but denied to it the power of enforcing error, injustice, or absurdity.

Deuteronomy has, on this point, a passage of remarkable perspicacity. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet."* Thus in the eyes of the Israelites, the performance of a miracle did not suffice to sanctify the mission of a messenger of God. Its proof was the truth of his words, the agreement of his teachings with the immortal promises of Sinai; he who preaches lies and impiety, he who seeks to turn the people to false Gods, or to false conceptions of the Divinity, may perform miracles in vain; not only must his words be unheeded, but he is to suffer punishment. This doctrine had been greatly developed and boldly followed. At the time of Jesus, the teachings of the Synagogue did not admit of a miracle being sufficient to demonstrate a truth; they demanded that the truth should be of itself demonstrable.

In the traditions of the second temple, we meet an example of this as striking as it is sublime. It enables us to determine the high honor in which free enquiry as to matters of religion was held by those Pharisean doctors, whom the gospel has so misrepresented before the tribunal of history.

* Deuteronomy xiii. 1, etc.

VIII.

IN* one of the celebrated academies where all the sages of Israel were assembled, there arose an important discussion between Rabbi Eliezer, one of the glories of the Synagogue, and his colleagues, as to the interpretation of certain doctrinal matters referring to things clean and unclean. All the arguments advanced by Rabbi Eliezer in support of his opinions had been unanimously opposed and rejected by the other doctors. "Well," indignantly exclaimed the illustrious Rabbi, "let this banana part from its roots, and plant itself on the opposite side." At these words, the tree detached itself from its roots, and planted itself on the opposite side. "What does that prove?" cried the doctors with one voice, "and what connection has the value of this banana with the question which occupies us?" "Well," again exclaims Rabbi Eliezer, "may the rivulet that flows near us, demonstrate the truth of my opinion;" and suddenly, oh miracle! the waters of the brook re-ascended to their source. "Well," once more replied the other doctors, "whether the waters flow in one direction or another, what connection is there between this circumstance and the subject of our controversy?" "Well," impatiently said Rabbi Eliezer, "may the walls of this room serve me as proof and testimony;" and the pillars supporting the edifice bow, obedient to the voice of their master, and the walls crack and threaten to overwhelm them. Then Rabbi Schoschonah, one of the most renowned sages of his age, exclaimed, "O walls! O walls! when sages discuss the interpretation of the law, what have you to do with their argumentation?" And the walls stopped as they were falling, and remained lean-

* Talmud Babo Meziah, folio 59.

ing suspended over the heads of the doctors. "May God Himself pronounce supreme judgement," cried Rabbi Eliezer, and from the heavenly heights, the daughter of the voice was heard saying, "No longer call in question the doctrine of Rabbi Eliezer, reason is on his side."

Rabbi Schoschonah enters his protest; "Neither reason, nor the law," cries he, "is now in the depths of the heavens, neither miracles nor mysterious voices have, in our eyes, the power to demonstrate the truth. To human reason, to the decision of the majority of the sages of Israel is committed the interpretation of Thy law O Lord! Henceforth these alone are the only powers that can avail." Notwithstanding the miracles that were performed, notwithstanding the intervention of the divine voice, the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer was condemned by the doctors his cotemporaries. And the Talmud innocently adds, that Rabbi Nathan, having met the prophet Elijah, he asked him what had been said in heaven respecting this celebrated debate and received the following answer: "The Eternal smiled and replied, 'My sons are the strongest, my sons have triumphed!'" This is manifestly but a legend, in which no historical fact can be traced; but it is a legend that involves in itself, a whole system. It throws much light on the real ideas of the Synagogue and on the doctrine of Judaism respecting miracles. It is impossible not to be struck by the philosophical independence which is there shown and which frees itself from the shackles of a blind belief.

IX.

SUCH was not then alone the spirit of the Synagogue, but also the exact condition of popular belief at the time of Jesus.

Miracle was accepted as an incomprehensible fact, but not as a proof of divinity, and it was invested with still less importance and significance, when restricted to the cure of human infirmity, or to a species of supernatural therapeutics : in fact it was nothing new or strange among the Jews that men inspired by God should effect the cure of disease by unknown or inexplicable means. The Hebrew annals are replete with facts which seem to suggest that some privileged beings among men possess the wonderful faculty of influencing life and death, according to their will. The history of the great Jewish prophets is especially characterised by acts of this nature. But to none are attributed so many and such striking examples as to Elijah and Elisha : the history of Elisha particularly, from the number and the nature of the miracles performed by him, offers a very strong resemblance to that of Jesus. Elijah and Elisha twice restored to life, bodies that had been previously buried ; the one the son of the widow of Zarephath, the other of the Shunamite widow. They also multiplied meal and oil* and other articles of food. When a famine prevailed at Gilgal, Elisha fed all the people with a single pot-full of broth, and twenty loaves of barley bread. And, as says the text, "all the people did eat and they left thereof."† He cured Naaman the leper and many other diseased persons ;‡ lastly, his marvellous power became so great, that a dead man that was inadvertently buried with Elisha, revived and stood on his feet when he touched the prophet's bones.§ Jewish traditions abound in similar narratives, thus testifying

* 2 Kings iv. 1. et seqq.

† 2 Kings v. 14.

‡ 2 Kings ib. 44.

§ 2 Kings xiii. 21.

to the holiness of certain men of God, as the prophets were designated, and to the favour with which the Eternal listened to their prayers, when they interceded, either for individuals, or for the nation. A new class of miracle-workers existed in Israel at the time of Jesus, who though not prophets, were said to perform supernatural actions, by means of the all-powerful influence of the Ineffable Name. These were the Thaumaturgists or adepts at occult sciences, the most widely spread of which was the Kabala, held in much veneration in the Old Synagogue. Tradition has preserved the memory of several magicians, who, it is said, were cotemporaries of Jesus, particularly Simon mentioned in the Gospel itself. It speaks of a crowd of cabbalistic doctors, studiously bent over the great work, which has been the object ardently pursued by so many lofty intellects, in the hope of wresting some might from the infernal and the celestial powers, and even from God Himself. Besides, according to Jewish polemics, the gift of the miraculous was not accorded to Israel alone, by the Most High: Pagans themselves, apart from divine inspiration, are everywhere depicted in the Bible as having the power of performing miracles great as those of the prophets. In imitation of Moses the magicians of Pharaoh reproduced every one of the plagues with which the great liberator of Israel visited the Egyptians in the name of the living God. Balaam prophesies as wonderfully as the Hebrew seers. Thus miracles, and supernatural cures were facts to which the eyes and the minds of the Jewish people had been long habituated, and which, if admitted to be a sign of a mysterious power superior to that possessed by the generality of mortals, was nevertheless no proof of divinity. Instances there were of persons

having the power of healing, of working magic, of inspiration, of prophecy, but never had they been recognised as divine.

Now, in examining the miracles which, according to the Gospel narrative, were performed by Jesus, we may perceive that their aim was essentially the alleviation of human suffering. He opened the eyes of the blind, restored the dumb to speech, and the dead to life, and strengthened the paralysed. Like Elijah and Elisha, he multiplied some loaves of bread, and two or three fishes, to feed a whole people. Like them, he restored dead bodies, lying in the tomb, to life. These facts, which modern science has sought to explain by natural means, spread abroad as they were far and wide, augmented the authority, the spell and the reputation of the new Rabbi. But no one either in Judea, in Galilee, or elsewhere, ever dreamt of connecting with these qualities any idea of divinity. According to the Evangelists, the general opinion was that a new prophet had arisen in Israel. When Jesus arrived at Jerusalem, whither his great reputation had preceded him, he produced a great sensation and the people exclaimed, "Here is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth and Galilee,"* and the Gospel adds that notwithstanding the violent reproaches which he had levelled at the Pharisees and the chiefs of the Pontiffs, they durst not arrest him in his course, because they feared a rising of the masses who believed him to be a prophet.†

* Et cum intrasset Jerosolymam commota est universa civitas dicens : Quis est hic ? Populi autem dicebant : Hic est Jesus propheta à Nazareth Galileæ. Matthew xxi. 10, 11.

† Matthew xxi. 46.

FOURTH BOOK.

Uncertainty of opinions held in Judea with respect to Jesus.—Irresolution of his disciples.—Incredulity of his family.—Disposition of the magistrates.—The attacks made by Jesus on public authority.—Liberty of speech in Israel.—Political danger of the sermons of Jesus.—His ordinary retinue.—Moderation of the Jewish authorities.—The partisans of Jesus desire to proclaim him King.—Benevolence of the Pharisees.—Political situation of Judea.

I.

IF the majority of the Jews however, recognised Jesus to be a new Prophet, opinions were much divided respecting him, and the Evangelists betray this anxious condition of the public mind. It will be remembered, that at Nazareth he had been received with a general outburst of incredulity ; and if we may believe St. Luke,* the people, on a certain occasion, rose against him and drove him out of the city ; and in Jerusalem and the rest of Judea, the same indecision prevailed. While some proclaimed him a Prophet, while others again, enquired if he was not Messiah, although the received opinion was that the Messiah was not to come from Galilee,† others believed him to be possessed by the

* Luke iv. 28 and 29.

† John vii. 41 and 52. Quidem autem dicebant : Numquid à Galileâ venit Christus ? Responderunt et dixerunt ei : Numquid et tu Galilæus ? Scrutare Scripturas et vide, quia à Galileâ propheta non surgit.

Devil* and threw stones at him, as a dangerous madman.

Indeed, if we rely on the discourses pronounced by Jesus in the presence of the people and at the conclusion of which, the audience proclaimed him to be possessed by the demon, we shall perceive that for persons who understood literally the words of the new Rabbi, it was difficult to comprehend his sermons. He addressed them thus :—

“ You neither know me nor my father : if you knew who I am, you would also know my father : † ye are from beneath, and I am from above ; ye are of this world ; I am not of this world ; ‡ I am going whither ye cannot follow me ; I am from the beginning of all things ; § I say unto you, I was before Abraham. || Those who believe in me, will never die.” ¶ These strange assertions were incomprehensible to the Jews of that time. John while quoting them at length, avows that the hidden signification was quite incomprehensible to those present.**

And the people were much perplexed with regard to Jesus. Some declared in his favour, others feared the excitement he might occasion among the populace, and much uncertainty prevailed in the public mind. His disciples themselves did not always seize his meaning, but were obliged to ask him for an explanation of the

* Responderunt ergo Judæi et dixerunt ei : Nonne benè dicimus nos quia Samaritanus es et dæmonium habes? . . . Dixerunt ergo Judæi : Nunc cognovimus quia dæmonium habes . . . Tulerunt ergo lapides ut jacerent in eum. John viii. 48, 52, 59.

† John viii. 19.

‡ Ibid. 23.

§ Ibid. 25.

|| Ibid. 58.

¶ Ibid. 51.

** The whole chapter of St. John which refers to this scene merits perusal. We print it at the end of the work in the Appendix.

words he addressed to the multitude. Sometimes too, they remained entirely ignorant of the aim and significance of his discourses. His family, in their turn, evinced as much incredulity as the inhabitants of Nazareth ;* his brothers, whom he had refused to see on a remarkable occasion,† urged him to shew himself by striking acts, and incontestable proofs.‡ They reproached him for the mystery in which he enshrouded himself. “There is no man,” said they, “that doeth anything in secret, which he himself desireth to be known openly ; if thou hast really the power, show thyself to the world.”§ But Jesus hearkened not unto this advice, “for,” adds the Gospel, “neither did his brethren believe in him.”||

II.

It will be easily understood that the magistrates and authorities in Judea, could not entertain any very sympathetic feelings towards him. Personal motives and regard for public order both caused them to consider Jesus as a formidable disturber, as a revolutionist to be got rid of.

The personal motives were induced by the virulent attacks made upon them daily by the new reformer. “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,”¶ he publicly exclaimed, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Hypocrites,** wicked and adulterous race,†† therefore I

* John vii. 12, 42.

† Matt. xiii. 36 ; xv. 15, 16.

|| John vii. 5.

** Matt. xxiii. 29.

† Matthew xii. 47 ; John ii. 4.

§ John vii. 4.

¶ Matt. xxiii. 27.

†† Ibid. xvi. 4.

say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." * "Woe unto you, Scribes, Pharisees, ye generation of vipers, for ye devour widows' houses, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Woe unto you, ye blind guides. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zachariah." †

It does not form part of our plan to discuss in how far this violent indignation against the Pharisees was justified. It will be seen later by several characteristic examples, that Phariseeism, which constituted the strength, the greatness, and the salvation of Israel, is in no way inferior, as regards moral teaching, to the Gospel itself. We may well understand that the vituperative speeches pronounced by Jesus against the Pharisees, those holding authority over the multitude and objects of their respect, (whether well founded or exaggerated) were not calculated to conciliate, or to secure the favor of the religious and political chiefs of Judea.

Yet the Pharisees were obliged to submit patiently to his severe censures. In Jewish society, freedom of speech had ever prevailed, unlimited and uncontrolled. The prophets were not only the inspired Seers of God, who predicted the future and revealed the decrees of Heaven to Israel, they were also political tribunes filled with energy and courage, exerting extraordinary influence over the minds of the masses, declaiming unchecked, against rulers and kings, condemning and deposing

* Matt. xxi. 43, 44.

† Ibid. xxiii. 33, 35.

princes ; and enforcing by their prestige and boldness the submission of the very persons whom they denounced.

Among no other people and at no other epoch, in ancient or modern times, was the right of discussion carried further, or more freely exercised than in Judea. How insipid and feeble is the revolutionary eloquence of our day, compared with the fiery harangues addressed to Kings and people by the Isaiahs, Jeremiahs and Ezekiels, and by that prophetic constellation, whose masculine utterances at this distant period excite our admiration. The right of speech was then sacred in Israel, and the man who came to denounce and to brand the crimes of the great, and the errors of the people in the name of the living God, and of public morality, was revered by all the citizens, as he was inviolable before the law.

Thus Jesus being greeted by the majority as a Prophet, made free use of the privilege granted by early habit to the "Men of God." The words quoted above, offer sufficient evidence that he did not restrain the violence of his discourses, or of his anathemas. The scribes and Pharisees doubtless felt great indignation on finding themselves insulted and attacked in public, by the violent orations of the reformer of Nazareth ; but they bore them in silence, fearing to institute proceedings against him, lest a general rising might ensue if they touched him, whom the people regarded as a prophet.* Nevertheless it must be admitted that their resentment against Jesus was justified by the new prophet's violence.

Even now, in the midst of the nineteenth century, at a period of universal enlightenment and progress, were

* Metuerunt turbas quoniam sicut prophetam eum habebant. Matthew xxi. 46.

a popular orator to indulge in the least of these accusations and menaces against the established authority and the magistrates of the state, which Jesus uttered, eighteen hundred years ago, against the Pharisees and the scribes, in vain would such a man declare that he came in the name of God, and that he was the son of the Eternal; in vain would he claim the right of free enquiry and the inviolability of the prophetic character; he would at once be arrested, imprisoned, tried and condemned without extenuating circumstances, "as guilty of offences against the depositories of public authority, and for exciting hatred and contempt against the government."*

III.

THE reasons were no less weighty which, in the interest of general order, rendered Jesus a dangerous character in the eyes of the public men of Judea.

Like all political reformers, he threw himself for support on the masses; he preferred addressing them, since he was sure to be listened to with attention, when declaiming against the excesses and abuses of power, and against the vices of the government of his time. He said, "But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.† Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief

* Laws of the 17th May, 1819; March 25th, 1822; September, 1835.

† Luke xiii. 30; Matthew xix. 30; Ibid. xx. 16.

among you, let him be your servant.* Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."† Again he said, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."‡

The logical consequence of his doctrines was communism; and no one could enter the commune without dispossessing himself of all his wealth. The poor were to be the most powerful in the kingdom of heaven, and the episode of Lazarus and of the rich man excluded from heavenly happiness, solely because he had had his portion of good in this life, is a very significant proof of this theory.§ Jesus exhorted his disciples to leave their parents, to free themselves from all ties, and from all family duties, to devote themselves entirely to him. In certain cases, he pardoned adultery, and proclaimed the illegality of human justice, and of the right of punishment. Finally, he unreservedly declared that he came, not to bring peace but war, that he came to separate the son from his father, the daughter from her mother, and to sow dissension in the midst of the family circle.||

All these acts, all these principles may without doubt be explained by a kind of transcendental morality and philosophy. After the lapse of many centuries, the origin of an era of progress, of civilisation, of universal charity may be therein discovered. But in the estimation of contemporary authority, so ill-treated generally

* Matthew xx. 25—27; xxiii. 11, 12.

† Matthew xviii. 4.

‡ Matthew xix. 21—24; Mark x. 25; Luke, xviii. 22.

§ Luke xvi. 19—31.

|| Matthew x. 34, and xix. 29.

besides by Jesus, it could be only regarded as open revolt against social order. For every regularly ordered state subsists not by means of a superhuman morality and of abstract theories only, but rather by means of positive laws, rigidly enforced and respected by all members of the community.*

Indeed, Jesus did not even confine himself to those maxims, which must necessarily have appeared revolutionary to those invested with power ; but he also declared that from his time, and even from that of John the Baptist, the whole law was abrogated and no longer possessed compulsory power.†

But the most serious circumstance, in the opinion of the magistrates charged with the maintenance of public order, was that Jesus was habitually surrounded by an escort consisting of his favourite disciples. These had been selected from the lowest ranks of the social scale ; fishermen, like Simon, Andrew, James and John ; publicans, like Matthew. Around them gathered a crowd of publicans, of petty officials, despised and hated by the people, because they were charged with the collection of the taxes, and were persons of doubtful character.

These were joined by a needy crowd, who rejoiced

* The episode of the woman taken in adultery (John viii. 3, etc.) is certainly sublime as an expression of kindness and mercy ; but the maxim then declared by Jesus if regarded in a social point of view, led to nothing short of rendering the action of the tribunals impossible and illegal. It was the absolute denial of the right of judging and of punishing. In fact such was really the substance of his doctrine, for, on another and less solemn occasion, he said to his disciples, " Judge not, lest ye be judged." Matthew vii. 1.

† Luke xvi. 16.

in hearing it proclaimed that the rich could not enter the kingdom of heaven, and by sick poor, eager to approach the new Rabbi, whose touch was of healing power.

IV.

WE ask our readers to place themselves for a moment in imagination, in the position of the authorities of Judea, it being conceded that they did not recognise in Jesus, a God who had come from heaven to save the human race ; we ask them to remember how alarming was this assemblage of ill-conducted vagrants, led by a violent preacher, who declaimed without hesitation against the established powers and against the whole society of his age ; and they will at once admit that the magistrates had some reason for apprehension and for adopting measures by which the agitation excited among the masses by Jesus, should be prevented from degenerating into disorder and revolution. With the warning gentleness which characterised the Jewish legislation and the functionaries charged with its execution, they had several times admonished the disciples of Jesus by saying : " Why does your master eat and drink with publicans and people of vicious lives ? " * Jesus offered an admirable reply to this question, a reply preserved in the Gospel. He said : " The sick require the doctor, not those who are in health. I do not come for the just, but for sinners." † But sublime as was the end, the means for its attainment were, in the opinion of the magistrates none the less dangerous. The crowd that gathered round the new master, daily increased in

* Mark ii. 16.

† Ibid. 17.

number; the ideas and passions of the populace were excited, and their enthusiasm was awakened by his words. Among the doubtful characters who followed him, and who accepted only such portions of his predications as corresponded with their secret instincts against the rich and the powerful, this disorder might have easily been followed by seditious movements and actual insurrection. In fact, at one moment, led away by their ardour and probably hoping that if Jesus was once invested with authority, he would carry out his maxims of equality and his promised measures in favour of the poor and the masses, his partisans resolved to proclaim him King. Everything was prepared; they were to possess themselves of his person and to raise him by force to the supreme power. John, who reveals this conspiracy, tells us at the same time, that Jesus, wiser and more prudent than his disciples, having been informed of this design and considering it impracticable, once more fled to the mountains.* The only result of this abortive plot was to redouble the vigilance of the magistrates, and to excite in the highest degree the anger of Herod, who being then invested with authority regarded Jesus as a rival and a pretender, in other words an enemy whom he must render powerless. Having previously caused John the Baptist to be imprisoned and beheaded,† Herod then ordered that Jesus should be arrested.

Here a striking circumstance may be remarked, indicative of the passionate and prejudiced nature of the accusations directed by Jesus against the Pharisees; for we find that moved by a most laudable feeling of compassion, and unmindful of the attacks of which they

* John vi. 15.

† Matthew xiv. 10.

themselves had been the objects, they went to warn Jesus of the inimical designs of Herod.* When they advised him to escape, he replied to them, "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following." In fact, he followed their counsel and avoided the persecution of Herod, (to whom as we have seen he evinced no greater courtesy than he had done to the scribes and Pharisees,) by immediate flight, in order to fulfil his mission.

V.

THUS, if the masses could see and even revere in Jesus, a prophet, who spoke in the name of the God of Israel, with that independence which had ever been the privilege of the religious tribunes of Judea;—the magistrates being of a cooler temperament, and less ea'sily carried away than the populace, regarded him as a dangerous agitator, who surrounded by a crowd of persons of bad character, was likely to cause serious disturbances in the towns in which he preached his new social doctrines. Many peaceful citizens shared, in this respect, the fears of the heads of the nation, and popular tumults were often apprehended. We have just seen indeed, that the disciples of Jesus, either without his knowledge, or with his consent, actually contemplated investing him with sovereign authority and raising him to the throne.

Nor must we forget, that at the period at which these

* Luke xiii. 31 et seqq.

events occurred, Judea was torn by violent dissensions within, and threatened with serious dangers from without. The Jewish people had yielded reluctantly to the yoke of the Romans and to their interference in the affairs of Judea. Herod was detested, as the representative of the power and of the ideas of Rome. The minds of men were divided by a violent party spirit. The zealots dreamed of the deliverance of their holy country, and were burning to revenge their recent defeats. Never had the position of affairs been more threatening; internal agitation and strife, dark forebodings of an approaching national struggle against the Romans, then masters of the world. Assuredly, this was not the moment to think of social reforms, or questions of speculative morality; it was not the moment to give the rein to tribunes, who would seek to arouse the passions of the people, and endanger the public peace. It was necessary to cement the union of the citizens and the national interests, and not to foster division which would necessarily facilitate the designs of the Romans and hasten the final subjection of Judea.

The speeches of Jesus; the new party of which he was the chief and the soul, and the ardour of his disciples were, under these circumstances, perilous in the extreme; the Jewish magistrates cannot with justice, be reproached for having employed every means in their power, to avert these consequences.

One thing alone in their eyes could have justified the words and the acts of Jesus; the irrefutable proof that he was really the expected Messiah. We have seen how earnest and general, at this epoch, was the hope of a liberator. The Jews, chiefs and people, all longed for the hour of their deliverance; they turned their anxious

gaze to the four quarters of the heavens, for the revealing signs which would announce the saviour of Israel. Had Jesus, justifying this sacred title, boldly proclaimed that he came to free the Jews from a foreign yoke, to re-establish the throne of David, and—a second Moses,—to snatch Israel from a Roman Egypt, if, above all, he had revealed his mission of deliverer by striking manifestations, the whole of Judea would have followed him with acclamation.

We shall presently see pontiffs, chiefs of the people, doctors of law, scribes and Pharisees hasten to him, full of anxiety and hope, entreat him to declare truly unto them whether in him they might salute the promised Messiah, and to reveal to them a sign, by which they might recognise him ; but we shall also see Jesus harshly repel them, obstinately refuse the manifestations they ask of him, and shroud himself more and more, in systematic mystery.

FIFTH BOOK.

Uncertainty of opinion as to the messianic character of Jesus.—He reveals himself to his apostles.—He forbids their saying aught about him to the Jews.—Motives for this prohibition.—Doubts as to the descent of Jesus.—Incredulity strengthened by his discourses.—Justification of the urgency of the Jews.—Reiterated demands for proofs.—Refusal, and evasive replies of Jesus.—The people beseech him to make himself known ; he refuses.

I.

JESUS in fact, allowed himself to be greeted as the predicted Christ, Redeemer of Israel, by his disciples and by the populace that crowded around him ; but when asked to confirm his title and his authority by positive proofs, his replies were far from satisfactory.

Besides, though the people were almost unanimous in recognising and welcoming him as a new prophet, public opinion was far more undecided regarding his messianic character. Some, as we have seen above, supposed him to be John the Baptist, restored to life ; others to be Elijah ; others Jeremiah ; others again one of the great prophets ;* but very few admitted him to be the Christ.

He took great care to make himself acquainted with the prevailing impression in this respect, and his disciples reported to him, the various rumours that were current respecting him.† “And you,” said he one day to his

* “And they said : Some say that thou art John the Baptist ; some Elias ; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” Matthew xvi. 14.

† Ibid. xvi. 13.

apostles, "who do you think I am?" Simon Peter, replied, "Thou art Christ, the son of the living God." "Happy art thou, Simon, son of Jonah," answered Jesus, "in that this revelation hath been made to thee, not by flesh and blood, but by the inspiration of my Father who is in heaven."*

This is the first time since he began to preach, that Jesus had solemnly assumed the title of Messiah in the presence of his own disciples.†

The text which we have just quoted is important in so far, that it proves that the son of Mary had not, previously, revealed his final projects, even to his most intimate adherents, that they had until then, esteemed him to be only a sage, a man inspired by God, a prophet, a great reformer, not the Christ who was to save Israel.

Since Jesus had at length made himself known, it may be presumed that he purposed then, to raise the veil which still concealed him, and to shine forth in the sight of the whole nation, in all the splendour of his divine apostolate. This is erroneous. Scarcely had he received from Simon Peter the revealing answer we

* *Dixit illis Jesus : Vos autem, quem me esse dicitis? Respondens Simon Petrus dixit, Tu es Christus, filius Dei vivi. Respondens autem Jesus, dixit ei : Beatus es, Simon bar Jonæ, quia caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed Pater meus qui in cœlis est. Matthew xvi. 15, 16, 17.* This happy reply secured to Simon Peter, not only the distinction of being entitled the Keystone of the future Church and the office of holding the keys, but also the promise, that what he should loose, or bind on earth, should be loosed or bound in heaven. *Matthew xvi. 18-19.* It is well known that the Papal authority and the supremacy, material and spiritual, of the Bishop of Rome is grounded on this Gospel text.

† *Matthew xvi. 20.* See also *Luke ix. 21.*

have just cited, than he expressly forbade his disciples from telling any man that he was the Christ.*

Moreover, this recommendation is not the only one of a like import that the Gospels record. It will be remembered, that at the time of the pretended apparition of Moses and Elijah † to Jesus at his transfiguration, the witnesses of the miracle, Peter, James, and John were ordered to say nothing to any one respecting this vision.

Neither can we forget the reproach that his brothers addressed to Jesus concerning the mystery in which he shrouded himself, and the repeated counsel they gave him, to avow himself at length in an open and public manner.‡

Luke and Mark, who likewise relate Simon Peter's answer to Jesus's inquiry, add that Jesus manifested displeasure at this revelation, and seriously reprov'd his disciples, admonishing them to say nothing to any one whatever.§

II.

It is desirable to state clearly, the motive which induced Jesus to enjoin on them complete silence. It is set forth in the narrative of Luke, thus : Simon Peter had just answered, "Thou art the Christ, the son of God."

* Tunc præcepit discipulis suis ut nemini dicerent quia ipse esset Jesus Christus. Matthew xvi. 20 ; Luke ix. 21.

† Luke, who also records the transfiguration on Mount Tabor, adds that the disciples scrupulously obeyed the orders of Jesus, and spoke to no one of what had happened. Et ipsi tacuerunt et nemini dixerunt in illis diebus quidquam ex his quæ viderant. Matthew xvii. 9 ; Luke ix. 36.

‡ John vii. 4.

§ At ille increpans illos, præcepit ne cui dicerent hoc. Luke ix. 21.

Then Jesus reproving them, (adds the Gospel,) straitly charged them and commanded them to tell no man that thing, because said he, "The son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."* Peter frightened at these mournful predictions, exclaimed, "Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be unto thee." But he turned and said unto Peter : "Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offence unto me ; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."†

The great importance of this passage may be easily understood. The founder of Christianity *voluntarily* left the Jews in ignorance of his mission. And wherefore ? In order that the Hebrew magistrates, being in the dark regarding him and considering him merely as a common agitator and threatening revolutionist, might prosecute and sentence him to death.

How strange a part then, did he seek to assign to the whole nation and to its chiefs, in the drama of his life and of his death. For they had but two alternatives ; the one, in their ignorance of his messianic character to prosecute him as a disturber of the public peace, and to condemn him according to law ; and in this case, how could they be blamable in the eyes of posterity for

* Præcepit ne cui dicerent hoc, dicens quia *oportet* filium hominis multa pati, et reprobari a senioribus, principibus sacerdotum et scribis et occidi, et tertiâ die resurgere. Luc. ix. 21, 22 ; Matthew xvi. 21.

† Et assumens eum Petrus, cœpit increpare illum dicens, Absit a te Domine ; non erit tibi hoc ? Qui conversus, dixit Petro : Vade post me Satana ; scandalum es mihi, quia non sapis ea quæ Dei sunt, sed ea quæ hominum. Matthew xvi. 22, 23.

having regarded him only as an ordinary criminal ; or, adopting the second alternative, to leave his attempt to stir up revolt, unheeded or unpunished ? But then, in face of the non-fulfilment of his predictions, what would have become of his pretensions to the title of Son of God and Messiah ?

In either event, the Jews were certainly not guilty in not recognising one, who adopted so much precaution to avoid being known. What responsibility could they possibly have incurred, if it is true that Jesus rendered them, voluntarily and designedly, the fatal instruments of torments, which he himself declared to be indispensable to the success of his work ?

III.

BESIDES, neither his deeds, nor his words were calculated to inspire the nation with the conviction that he was the Messiah, the deliverer of the people of God. It is well known that the Messiah was to be of the royal race, a lineal descendant of David. Those who said of Jesus, "But is he not the son of the carpenter of Nazareth ? Do we not know his mother, his brothers and sisters ?" * were certainly little inclined to see in him, the legitimate heir of the great Hebrew Monarch. Aware of the objections to which his genealogy might give rise, he endeavoured to spread the idea that the Messiah needed not necessarily to be the son of David. One day, when surrounded by the Pharisees, he asked them, "What think ye of Christ ? Whose son is he to be ?" They answered him, 'The son of David.' 'How

* Matthew xiii. 55.

then,' he rejoined, 'does David call him his Lord? If David calls him Lord, how then could he be his son?'"*

This was, in fact, the denial of one of the most generally accepted traditions of the Synagogue as to one of the essential signs by which the Messiah was to make manifest his divine mission, and if we may thus express it, his legitimacy. Again, the Jews, supported in their belief by numerous prophecies, had always considered the advent of the messianic epoch, as the inauguration of an era of universal peace, concord, and fraternity. On this point, Jesus disturbed all their preconceived ideas and all their hopes. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword, for I am come to set a man against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his household. I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled."†

Apologists are not wanting, who give to these very significant words, a sense which deprives them of all their weight. But in the eyes of the Jews, accustomed

* *Congregatis autem Phariseis, interrogavit eos Jesus dicens : Quid vobis videtur de Christo? Cujus filius est? Dicunt ei : David. Ait illis : Quomodo ergo David in spiritu vocat eum Dominum, dicens : Dixit Dominus Domino meo. . . . Si ergo David vocat eum Dominum, quomodo filius ejus est? Matt. xxii. 41 et seqq.*

† *Nolite arbitrari quia pacem venerim mittere in terram : non veni pacem mittere sed gladium. Veni enim separare hominem adversus patrem suum et filiam adversus matrem suam et nutrium adversus socrum suam ; et inimici hominis, domestici ejus. Matthew x. 34 et seqq.—Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur? Putatis quia pacem veni dare in terram? Non, dico vobis, sed separationem. Erunt enim ex hoc quinque in domo unâ divisi, tres in duos et duo in tres dividuntur. Luke xii. 51, 52.*

as they were, to hear all the prophets announce with one accord, that the arrival of the Messiah would bestow peace and happiness on the whole earth, and would permit the lamb to lie down without fear by the side of the wolf, these menacing predictions were wholly irreconcilable with their secular belief. It should therefore not surprise us, that they demanded again and again, incontrovertible proofs of the messianic character with which the popular voice began to invest Jesus.

IV.

THE apologists of the Gospel, finding it impossible to justify the mystery in which Jesus never ceased obstinately to enshroud himself in the presence of the Jewish people, accused that people and addressed them in terms of bitter reproach for having dared to demand proof of him, who presented himself to them as Christ the Redeemer. According to them, his divinity beamed around him as a glorious halo, which they must have been blind, not to see.

This is an argument of sentiment and of faith, but not of reason. In order to judge of the attitude assumed by the Jews towards Jesus, it is ever indispensable to place ourselves mentally amid contemporaneous circumstances, and to study historically, the prevailing intellectual and spiritual condition of the public mind. At the opening of this treatise, we enumerated the revealing facts which, in accordance with the steadfast traditions of Judaism, were to characterise the messenger, and the messianic epoch. Let us briefly recapitulate them.

The Messiah was to be a descendant of the house of David.

He was to be preceded by the prophet Elijah.

He was to ensure the triumph of Israel over all their enemies, he was to re-establish the throne of the king-prophet, and to make Jerusalem the metropolis of the universe.

The approach of the messianic period was to be marked by one of those miraculous phenomena which would awaken the remembrance of the splendid scene on Sinai. Lastly, peace was to reign over all the earth, and the one name of Jehovah was to be universally adored.

The Jewish people could not sever their faith in the advent of Messiah, from the realisation of these ancient promises. Each time that amid national and religious calamities a man arose claiming to be their long-expected deliverer, the first impulse of the Hebrews must have been, to require from him unimpeachable signs, which would render valid his claim to be recognised and welcomed.

The numerous deceptions of which the Jewish people had been the victims, previously to the time of Jesus ; the pseudo-Messiahs who had so often over-excited the hopes of Israel, naturally rendered people and chiefs more distrustful.

In this state of affairs, the true Messiah ought to have sought, not to conceal himself from, but to wholly reveal himself to his contemporaries, and to prove that all the prophecies were fulfilled in him.

But exactly the contrary occurred.

Elijah the forerunner had not appeared ; the descent from David was far from being established in the person of the son of Joseph and Mary. Jesus forbade his

disciples to make him known to the Jews ; and still further to disturb the messianic ideas of his time, he declared that of the temple and of Jerusalem not one stone would be left on the other ; that the law itself, that law whose sublime principles all the nations of the earth would one day accept, would be completely abolished ; finally, that instead of the predicted peace, he brought war. All this was so entirely opposed to the hopes of Israel, that it is impossible to censure the contemporaries of Jesus, for having besought him to grant them some irresistible revelation.

Fault is found with what was unjustly called the materialistic spirit and the narrow ritualism of the Pharisees of that period ; but it was not they alone, who entertained serious doubts as to the mission of the Galilean doctor. We have already seen how great was the incredulity of his family ; his own disciples were far from being convinced ; in their intimate intercourse with their master, they frequently entreated him to grant them the prophetic sign by which he was to reveal himself to the world.

This visible sign, these material proofs, which Jesus refused to give to the Jews and to the Pharisees, he on the contrary promised to his disciples, and he announced to them, the coming of the kingdom of God to be marked by deeds and phenomena which call to mind all the predictions of Zechariah and Malachi. He said :—
“ On the great and solemn day, ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power. And a great storm, like that of Sinai, shall tear the clouds asunder ; a bright gleam of celestial fire will shoot from east to west, the Son of man will appear in the clouds surrounded by angels and celestial trumpets will sound

around.”* These then, were the material signs promised by Jesus himself, a promise justifying the pressing demands of the Pharisees. Since the son of Mary himself admitted that these striking proofs were necessary to his final revelation, why was he angry and why are his apologists angry with the Jews, his contemporaries for demanding them during his own life. The disciples themselves often asked him, “But when will all these things happen?”† He answered these questions evasively, but he nevertheless affirmed, that several of those around him would not pass away, till all these things were fulfilled.‡ In fact his disciples were in the constant expectation, after his death, of seeing him appear with all the splendour of his divinity.§

Jesus and the apostles, shared the convictions of the Jewish people : they thought as they did, and as they did, affirmed that the arrival of the Messiah would be marked by miraculous signs in the heavens and on the earth.

This general belief is the one only point which it is incumbent on us to verify. The Hebrews may be blamed for having demanded material proofs and mysterious signs from Jesus ; it may be argued, that great truths are not proved, and do not win acceptance through such means ; we do not deny this. But, as soon as it is admitted that the essential condition of his messianic character, according to the general ideas obtaining at that period, was the signs predicted by the prophets and

* Matthew xvi., xix., xx., xxiv., xxv. ; Mark xiv. 62.

† Matthew xxiv. 3 ; Mark xiii. 4.

‡ Matthew xxiv. 34 ; Luke xxi. 32.

§ Acts of the Apostles i. 11 ; *ibid.* iii. 20, 21.

announced by Jesus himself, one can only deplore the obstinate silence with which he met the frank demand of the Hebrews.

V.

It is impossible for us to quote all the passages in the Gospels which testify to the anxiety with which the chief priests and the people, the doctors of the law and the whole population interrogated the "prophet of Galilee." Let us confine them to a few essential texts. One day, when he had attacked the Pharisees who were around him with his usual violence, calling them "a race of vipers who were incapable of good sentiments and accursed in the present and in the future. . . ." Some of those whom he treated with this severity, drew near unto him and said, "But Master, we would see a sign from thee, that should prove thy power unto us." Then Jesus exclaimed, "This evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas ; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* This mysterious allusion to the resurrection was not understood by the Hebrews. Besides, was not the postponement until after his death, of the appearance of a supernatural sign which would reveal him to the Jews of his age as Messiah and Son

* Tunc responderunt ei quidam de scribis et pharisæis dicentes : Magister, volumus a te signum videre. Qui respondens ait illis, Generatio mala et adultera signum quærit ; et signum non dabitur ei, nisi signum Jonæ prophetæ. Matthew xii. 38 et seqq.

of God, in fact a direct refusal, to give proofs which might have enlightened his contemporaries and have inspired them with faith in his person and in his works?

Another day, the Sadducees and Pharisees accosted him repeating their request, "If thou hast the power imputed to thee, show us a sign from heaven to convince us." Jesus replied again in the same terms, announcing to them the sign of Jonas, and departed, leaving them in the same uncertainty as before.*

St. Mark relates that under similar circumstances, he exhibited a yet more obstinate resolve to be silent. Some Pharisees came forth and began to question him, seeking of him a celestial sign, which might reveal him to their eyes. Jesus only breathed a deep sigh saying, "Why does this generation seek after a sign? Verily, I say unto you, there shall no sign be given unto them."†

Instead of decidedly refusing the explanations demanded of him, he often evaded questions, and perplexed his interrogators by skilfully raising objections, of which the following is an instance.

He entered the Temple, teaching and preaching. The chief priests and the elders of the people drew near unto him and said, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this power?" To this very simple and natural inquiry Jesus replied, "Let me first question you on one thing. Did baptism administered by John proceed from God or man?" The priests and

* Et exierunt pharisæi et cœperunt conquerere cum eo quærentes ab illo signum de cœlo. Et ingemiscens spiritu ait, Quid generatio illa signum quærit? Amen dico vobis, si dabitur generationi isti signum. Mark viii. 11, 12.

† Matthew xvi. 1 et seqq.

the elders hesitated, for if they confessed that John was sent by God, the rejoinder might be, "Why did ye not believe in him?" Had they declared John's power simply human, they would have offended popular opinion, for he was universally held to be a prophet. Uncertain, they answered Jesus and said, "We cannot tell." "Oh! ye cannot tell, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." *

To perplex his adversaries was doubtless a skilful mode of freeing himself from a difficulty; but it must be admitted that it was virtually an absolute refusal to give a proof which the elders and pontiffs of Israel had, after all, a right to demand.

Besides, he almost always replied to questions addressed to him on important points, in terms which were unintelligible to his hearers. "When will the kingdom of God come?" one day asked the Pharisees. He replied to them, "*The kingdom of God will not come in a manner to be observed*; neither will it be said, It is here, or it is there, for behold, even now the kingdom of God is amongst you." †

* Et cum venisset in templum, accesserunt ad eum docentem principes sacerdotum et seniores populi dicentes: Tu qua potestate hæc facis? Et quis tibi dedit hanc potestatem? Respondens Jesus dixit eis: Interrogabo vos et ego unum sermonem, Baptismus Joannis undè erat? è cœlo an ex hominibus? At illi cogitabant inter se... Et respondentes Jesu dixerunt: Nescimus: Ait illis et ipse: Nec ego dico vobis in qua potestate hæc facio. Matthew xxi. 23 and 5. Compare Mark xi. 27, which is even more precise.

† Interrogatus autem a Pharisæis: Quando venit regnum Dei? Respondens eis dixit: Non venit regnum Dei cum observatione; neque dicent: Ecce hic aut ecce illic, ecce enim regnum Dei intra vos est. Luke xvii. 20 and following. Let us here state once for all that all the passages of the Gospel texts that we translate into French are

From all the preceding quotations, it is evident that he really employed every possible expedient to prevent the reign of God, of whose triumph on earth they were to be the agents, from being remarked by the Jews.

"But," said the Pharisees to him, "who art thou then?" Jesus replied, "Even that I spoke unto you from the beginning." The unfortunate Pharisees could not, assuredly, discover much meaning in this mystical reply. It was, therefore, not without good reason, that they said to him, "Thou bearest testimony to thyself, thy testimony therefore is not admissible; prove thy power otherwise than by thy own assertions."

To this evidently logical observation, Jesus was content to reply, "My testimony is true, though I testify only unto myself, for I know whence I came and whither I go; *but ye, ye know not whence I come or whither I go.*" ‡ It was then, precisely because he left them in complete ignorance, that they ceased not to question him, being desirous, as were all the inhabitants of Judea, of at length attaining certainty as to his origin, his mission and his aim.

The curiosity and the eager interest of the elders of the people furnish additional proof of the emotion that

quoted from the translation of LEMAISTRE DE SACY, the most authorised by the Catholic Church.¹

* Dicebant ergo ei : Tu quis es ? Dixit eis Jesus, Principium qui et loquor vobis. John viii. 25.

† Dixerunt ergo ei pharisæi : Tu de te ipso testimonium perhibes. Testimonium tuum non est verum. John viii. 13.

‡ Respondit Jesus et dixit eis : Et si ego testimonium perhibeo de me ipso, verum est testimonium hi enim quia scio unde veni et quo vado. Vos autem nescitis unde venio aut quo vado. Ibid. 14.

¹ The Translator has followed the English Authorised Version.

Jesus awakened around him, and of the hopes which he excited. Had Jesus placed himself at the head of the popular party, of which the Pharisees were the moving spirit, he would have rallied all minds around him.

However, we may perceive that he saw, in the demands of the Pharisees, scribes and priests, but a machination of his natural enemies to tempt and ruin him. A solemn occasion at length presented itself for making himself known ; would he take advantage of it ?

One day he was walking in the temple, under Solomon's porch. The populace, long uncertain and hesitating regarding him, gathered around and conjured him to declare himself. "How long," said the Jews unto him, "wilt thou keep our minds in suspense? IF THOU ART THE MESSIAH, DECLARE IT UNTO US PLAINLY." *

The hour was certainly propitious ; the severest test was there. It was no longer a mere party of cunning Pharisees who came to ensnare Jesus ; a whole people, thirsting for divine aid, were they who supplicated him to make himself known, no longer to keep their minds in suspense, but to declare at length whether he was that Messiah whom they so impatiently expected. Jesus again refused any categorical explanation ; fresh reproaches were his only answer ; he accused the Jews of being incredulous ; he told them that they were not his sheep ; that his sheep alone knew him, etc.

Incredulous ! but never was a people, and we cannot urge this too strongly, more truly disposed to welcome the Saviour of Israel and of the whole human race !

* Et ambulabat Jesus in templo, in porticu Salomonis ; circumdederunt ergo eum Judæi et dicebant ei: *Quousque animam nostram tollis ?* Si tu es Christus, dic nobis palam. John x. 23, 24.

Incredulous ! but by what, it may be asked, would the Jews have been justified in believing, either in the messianic character, or in the divinity of Jesus ? They questioned him with manifest sincerity, moved by an ardent desire to find in him the long hoped for messenger of God ; he answered them not, he refused to satisfy their just demands, or he clothed his reply in impenetrable mystery. Who will dare, in presence of all these facts, to cast blame on the inhabitants of Judea for not having recognised in the son of Mary the heir of David, the Messiah promised by the prophets ?

Yet, he would doubtless have peacefully continued to utter his predictions, had they not, by degrees, infringed the fundamental principles of the Jewish law : THE ABSOLUTE UNITY AND INVISIBILITY OF GOD. Jesus soon began to arrogate to himself a divine nature and authority in the presence of the people. This doubtless was the basis of his doctrine, as Christianity made it the essential dogma of the new faith. Let us follow him into this new arena.

SIXTH BOOK.

JESUS ascribes to himself a divine nature.—He at first hesitates and confines himself to the remission of sin.—Various instances.—Mary Magdalene.—Hebrew doctrine as to the forgiveness of sin.—Unequivocal declaration of his divinity by Jesus.—Indignation of the Jews.—Jesus is deserted by his disciples.—Statement of the sentiments of the Hebrew people.—Doctrine of Judaism on the UNITY, IMMATERIALITY and INVISIBILITY of God.—Unalterable attachment of the Hebrew people to this belief.—Penalties pronounced against prophets who taught belief in other Gods.

I.

WE are approaching the most critical period in the life of Jesus. The prophet of Galilee, after having in the presence of his disciples, if not in that of the people, assumed the sacred title of Messiah, after having been the object, if not the accomplice, of the abortive conspiracy whose purpose was to raise him to the throne, at length aspired to a yet more exalted authority. He claimed to be the equal of the living God, Creator of heaven and earth.

In truth, if the tradition relating to the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus, was contemporaneous with his life, that he should have waited until he had attained his thirtieth year without boldly proclaiming his divine origin, is wholly inexplicable. Nor can it be understood why Mary, to whom the angel of the annunciation had revealed the divine nature of the infant to be born to her,

did not make it publicly known, when that son sought by his prelections and his miracles, to disseminate a new doctrine and new tenets throughout Israel.

It is here necessary to demonstrate, that Jesus did not at first, clearly formulate his claim to divinity. He evinced some hesitation to impair to that extent mosaic monotheism, for he was well aware that he would inevitably arouse the opposition and the zeal of all the Jewish laity, and incur the condemnation of the guardians of Israel's law. He indirectly claimed the qualities and the power attributed by the Hebrew faith, to God alone. The excitement of the people, on witnessing acts and hearing words, which involved a direct attack on the all-essential principles of the religion of Sinai, indicated sufficiently how powerful would be the opposition and the obstacles which such a claim would inevitably encounter.

Jesus therefore, did not at first announce positively that he was God ; but he pretended to put away sin, a function which the doctrine of Israel held to be one of the most sacred attributes of the Eternal. He said to a person affected with paralysis, who came to him at Capernaum to be healed, "My son, thy sins are forgiven thee."* Another day, when he was dining at the house of a Pharisee, a woman who was a sinner, came into the house having a vase filled with oil of myrrh in her hand. Kneeling at his feet, she bathed them with her tears, dried them with her hair, kissed them and anointed them with perfume. And he said, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. Adding to this promise, of somewhat doubtful morality, its

* Quorum fidem vidit et dixit : Homo, remittuntur tibi peccata tua. Luke v. 20 ; Mark ii. 5.

immediate fulfilment, he said unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven."*

These words shocked those who heard them, and they added, Who is he that forgiveth sins also? It is a blasphemy. Who can forgive, but God alone? (Luke vii. 49; v. 21.)

In fact, according to the faith of Israel it was blasphemy. The Jewish law, in accordance with universal reason, did not admit that there could be mediators between God and man, in relation to eternal justice; it did not admit that a simple mortal could either absolve from sin, or punish the violation of the divine law. God alone, who soundeth the heart and the reins, God alone, whose justice is unfailing, can grant pardon to a repentant sinner. Such is the incontestable doctrine of Judaism, in which at no period, and under no form, can it be found, that the right pertains even to the High Priest, definitively to pardon human wrong-doing.

The Gospel texts above quoted show that, even at the time of Jesus, this doctrine had lost nothing of its authority.

II.

To claim the power of absolving from sin was virtually on the part of Jesus an indirect declaration of divinity; but ere long his statement became more explicit. He said, "‘I am the living bread which came down from heaven.’† ‘This is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone that seeth the son and believeth on him, *may have everlasting life*.’‡ ‘I will raise him up at the last

* Luke vi. 47, 48.

† Et ego sum panis vivus qui de cœlo descendi. John vi. 51.—Quia descendi de cœlo. Ibid. 38.

‡ Hæc autem est voluntas Patris mei qui misit me, ut omnis qui videt filium et credit in eum habeat vitam æternam. John vi. 40.

day.* ‘As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, so the son quickeneth whom he will.’† ‘All that the Father doeth, so doeth the son likewise.’‡ ‘For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the son, to have life in himself.’§ ‘I and my Father are one.’ || ‘Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent unto the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, *I am the Son of God?*’ ” ¶

The Evangelist John, while citing all these significant discourses, which did not allow the Jews to have any doubt of the divine character to which Jesus laid claim, admits that they excited the greatest indignation in the chiefs and the people. The masses, by whom such willingness had been evinced to welcome him as a prophet, and who would even have accepted him as the Messiah, son of David, had he deigned to furnish

* Et ego resuscitabo eum in novissimo die. John vi. 39, 40, and 44.

† Sicut enim Pater suscitatur mortuos et vivificat, sic et Filius quos vult, vivificat. John v. 21.

‡ Quæcumque enim fecerit Pater, hæc et Filius similiter facit. John v. 19.

§ Sicut enim Pater habet vitam in semetipso, sic dedit et Filio habere vitam in semetipso. John v. 26.

|| St. John x. 30. On this point also the disciples whom we have already surprised several times in the criminal act of doubt, were far from having perfect faith. One of them, Philip, said to Jesus, “Master, show us the Father and that will suffice us.” Jesus saith unto him, “Have I been so long time with thee, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He who hath seen me, hath seen also the Father, and how sayest thou then, ‘Show us the Father.’ Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?” (Non creditis quia ego in Patre et Pater in me est?) John xiv. 8 and following.

¶ Quem Pater sanctificavit et misit in mundum, vos dicitis: Quia blasphematur, quia dixit: Filius Dei sum? John x. 36.

proofs of a messianic mission, these very masses were excited to fury against him, when by proclaiming himself the son of God and God Himself, he destroyed the very basis of the doctrine of the ABSOLUTE UNITY of the Eternal, which was the essence and foundation of the Jewish faith.

Thus, when he one day publicly declared that the Father and the son were one and the same being, the Jews took up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works have I shown you from my Father ; for which of these works, do ye stone me ?" The Jews answered him, saying, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, *being a man*, makest thyself God." (John x. 31.)

On another occasion, on which he had publicly violated the law of rest on the Sabbath, the Evangelist himself says that, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but had also said, that God was his Father, making himself *equal to God*. And when he declared, as in the above, that *he had come down from Heaven*, the people murmured at him, and said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph whose Father and Mother we know ? How then can he have come from Heaven ?"†

If we read the strange and unintelligible discourses by which Jesus replied to the murmurs and the irritation

* Propterea ergo magis quærebant eum Judæi interficere, quia non solum solvebat sabbatum, sed et Patrem suum dicebat Deum, æqualem se faciens Deo. John v. 15.

† Murmurabant ergo Judæi de illo, quia dixisset : Ego sum panis vivus qui de cœlo descendi. Et dicebant : Nonne hic est Jesus filius Joseph, cujus nos novimus patrem et matrem ? Quomodo ergo dicit hic : quia de cœlo descendi ? John vi. 41, 42.

of public opinion, we must admit they were not such as could produce conviction in the minds of his audience. Thus, his disciples themselves shared in the general sentiment, and protested in their turn against the divine nature that the master imputed to himself. Jesus, says the Gospel, knowing that his disciples murmured on this head, said to them, "Does this offend you? But there are some of you, who believe not." And in fact several of his disciples, after that departed from him and walked no more with him. He therefore remained with the twelve apostles, to whom he said on this occasion, "Will ye also go away?" But Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and we are sure that thou art the son of the living God."

Thus, as soon as Jesus openly declared that God was his Father and blended himself with the Eternal, the people who had previously testified so much sympathy for, now turned against, the prophet of Galilee. The greater number of his disciples abandoned him; the

* It is impossible to multiply quotations on this head. We refer our readers to the fifth, sixth, and following chapters of the Gospel of St. John which we publish in the Appendix. It will there be seen from the words of Jesus and from the observations of the people whom he addressed that not only was he not understood, but that to understand him was really impossible.

† *Sciens autem Jesus apud semetipsum quia murmurarent de hoc discipuli ejus, dixit eis: Hoc vos scandalizat? sunt quidam ex vobis qui non credunt. Ex hoc multi discipulorum ejus abierunt retro et jam non cum illo ambulant.* John vi. 62 and following.

‡ *Dixit ergo Jesus ad duodecim: Numquid et vos vultis abire? Respondit ergo ei Simon Petrus: Domine ad quem ibimus? Et nos credimus et cognovimus quia tu es Christus, Filius Dei.* John ibid. 68 and following.

twelve only remained with him, and even one of those subsequently betrayed, and another denied him.

The apostles themselves said to him, "Lord, how is it, that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, but not unto the world?"* Finally, the Hebrews becoming more and more uncertain, replied to those who proposed to them to adopt the doctrine of Jesus, "We are the disciples of Moses; we know that God spake unto Moses, but as for this man, we know not who he is, or whence he comes."†

We will here briefly examine the cause of this reprobation and the reason why the Jews refused to acknowledge a God in the son of Mary.

III.

THE essential basis and foundation of Judaism, is the Unity and invisibility of God. Hear O Israel, exclaims our legislator, the Eternal our Lord, the Eternal is One.‡ The object of humanity, the triumph of the chosen people, the sign of the messianic epoch consist essentially, according to the prophets, in the recognition and proclamation of the Unity of God. ON THAT DAY, said Zechariah, THE LORD SHALL BE ONE AND HIS NAME ONE.§ It is useless to enquire if this doctrine of the divine Unity, so simple, so sublime, so accessible to human reason, is consistent with the hypostatical theory of Plato, or with a trinity, at the same time one and multiply, according to the definite formula of catholicism.

* John xiv. 22.

† Maledixerunt ergo ei et dixerunt : Tu discipulus illius sis ; nos autem Moysi discipuli sumus. Nos scimus quia Moysi locutus est Deus : hunc autem nescimus undè sit. John ix. 28, 29.

‡ Deuteronomy vi. 4.

§ Zechariah xiv. 9.

We are here writing history and not religious dogma. We do not discuss the truth or the fallacy of the Christian Trinity. We seek only to verify the fact that in accordance with the Bible and all historical teaching, the Jews prior to, and after the age of Jesus, have ever proclaimed the UNITY OF GOD in the strictest sense of the word. Neither in their books, nor in their traditions is there to be found the slightest trace, either of a different belief, or of the faintest philosophical or religious compromise of this elementary principle. Thus then, the Hebrews adored the One only God, and they were convinced that all men, at the period fixed by the mysterious decrees of Providence, will render, as they did, adoration unto that One alone.

Further, they believed that this God is a pure spirit, who neither manifested Himself, nor could be seen under a material form. Moses, the well beloved prophet, he by whom the Eternal condescended to make himself heard, not seen, Moses himself had in vain besought God to shew him all His glory. "No," answered the Creator of Heaven and Earth, "thou canst not see my face, for no man can see me and live."* Again, when the inspired legislator repeated to the people of Israel before departing from among them, the fundamental principles of the law, he said to them; "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire. Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire."† It is for this end, that in this Decalogue, which has become the code of all

* Exodus xxxiii. 20.

† Deuteronomy iv. 12, 15.

civilised peoples, and in fact throughout the Bible, the worship of images is so frequently interdicted, as well as the sacrilegious dedication of statues to creatures of flesh and blood, of the worship which is due to the Eternal alone.*

Judaism did not accept the idea, that the Infinite can be restricted to a bodily form, or limited space ; it did not admit God could divide Himself into several portions, one of which would appear to the eyes of mortals, while the others would remain ever invisible, ever infinite, though separated in the heights of the heavens. The entire Pentateuch testifies to the efforts made by Moses, to instil immutably into the minds of his people the grand and comprehensive doctrine of the Unity and Invisibility of God. All the prophets recalled the Israelites to this fundamental dogma whenever they betrayed the least tendency to forsake it ; and never were their utterances more beautiful and more touching, than when they fulminated against pagan idolatry and polytheism.

Such was, in fact, the tradition of Israel from their earliest origin. The vocation of Abraham was but the declaration of the Unity and Immateriality of God, the solemn condemnation by the great patriarch of the worship of idols. Contemporaneously with and before the time of Jesus Christ, there existed several sects in Judaism ; but Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenees, Samaritans, etc., all professed the same belief on this point, and not the slightest difference or disagreement ever arose in Israel as to the nature and the attributes of the Eternal. The short and magnificent profession of faith above quoted, " HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE ETERNAL OUR

* Exodus xx. 4, 5. Deuteronomy v. 8, 9. Ibid iv. 16 and following.

GOD, THE ETERNAL IS ONE, was then, as it is now, the Israelite's most sacred prayer, one which it was incumbent on him to repeat morning and evening, which he was permitted to pronounce even in a profane tongue, in order that he might thoroughly comprehend its sense and its significance.

ONE ONLY GOD immaterial, infinite, invisible, who even when communicating His will directly to mortal man, caused him to hear a supernatural voice, but did not reveal Himself in any material form ; such were at the period of which we treat—after eighteen hundred years, such are now—the dogma and the faith of the Hebrew people.

IV.

WHAT this people had previously suffered, what it has endured since that epoch, for the preservation and the defence of this Unitarian principle, is unspeakable.

That people has ever easily submitted politically to every rule imposed upon it ; it yielded without much murmuring to the Babylonian captivity, to the sovereignty of Greece, to the yoke of the Romans, then masters of the world ; but let the sacred treasury of its religious belief be attacked, it at once faces defeat and death with entire indifference.

Judea might have been transformed into a Roman province, Jerusalem into a vassal of Rome ; but on the one condition, that the Temple remained in all its pristine purity, and that the law of the Unity should be unpolluted. There was not a Jew, at that period, who would not have preferred martyrdom and death, to the

violation of his religious faith. History is replete with striking examples which irrefutably prove the unconquerable ardour of this sentiment in all classes of Jewish society, men, women and even children.

During the first period of their social existence, the Hebrew people had frequent backslidings ; the unitarian idea slowly developed, but had not yet attained to that strength and energy in the minds of the chosen people which would have rendered it proof against the efforts of contemporaneous idolatries. The sons of Israel were still attracted by strange gods. The nation needed to struggle at that period of formation and development, against Pagan tendencies ; and it was necessary to endeavour to combat their moral weakness. The prophets, those valiant popular tribunes undertook this noble mission ; moved by the enthusiasm of their faith, they opposed chiefs and citizens, prevaricating priests and impious kings ; theirs was the lofty voice which rallied deserters and which, amidst idolatrous darkness, held aloft the torch of Sinai, the eternal light of monotheism, the divine law of Jehovah.

But after the destruction of the first temple, hesitation and apostasy were at an end in Israel. Monotheism had taken entire hold of the national mind, and the people were wholly devoted to the Unitarian faith. By it and for it alone they lived. To preserve it pure from all contact, from all strange and deteriorating influences, was its absorbing thought. To defend it against all attacks, was then and for ever its glorious mission.

All the phases of its second political existence, after the Babylonian captivity, are marked with the impress of this one only sentiment.

The religious idea alone inspired the heroism of the

Maccabees ; their aim was less to free Judea from Syrian domination, than to purify the Temple from the idols which there profaned the majesty of Jehovah. The conquerors of Israel had resolved to annihilate the Jewish religion, and to forbid its worship. Nothing more was needed to arouse the anger of the lion of Judah, and to excite that glorious Asmonean insurrection which for a time secured national independence.

At a period nearly coincident with the triumphs of the Maccabees, Alexander the Great, pursuing his dream of universal empire, appeared before the walls of Jerusalem. By a chance rare in the history of the conquerors of antiquity, he evinced great kindness to the vanquished, and promised the Jews to grant what they asked. They sought neither political independence, nor exemption from tribute, they asked but for this, for the right of freely and uninterruptedly following the religion of the One and Only God, and this favor being granted them was regarded by them as so important an event, that they made it the foundation of a new era from which all subsequent DOCUMENTS WERE DATED. Thus, after the return from the Babylonian captivity, the true country of the Israelite was the Temple, his true banner the Unity of God.

The more Israel felt itself to be menaced by the rising torrent of heathen invasion, the greater was its resistance. Its heroism and devotion grew with the danger to which the monotheistic faith was exposed, that faith to be ever after in conflict with the polytheism which ruled over the whole earth.

And marvellous is the result ! this belief, the essence and the strength of Judaism, assumed under the influence of the struggle which Judea maintained with all its ex-

ternal enemies, a character of astounding grandeur. At the moment of losing its political fatherland, the Jewish people, widening to the most distant horizons the future of its destiny, attained to the profound and irresistible conviction, that all the peoples of the earth will one day accept the law and the doctrine of the Unity, and that Israel is the High Priest of humanity, to whom is confided the charge of preserving intact for all nations, the treasury of immortal truths.

This was no new hope in the traditions of the Jewish people. It had been said unto Abraham, "that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed." Moses had predicted to the Hebrews, that on the day fixed by the secret decrees of Providence, all peoples would proclaim the Unity of God, and the truth of His law ; all the prophets had announced the triumph of monotheism, after ages of trial, of disasters, and of persecution. But at the period to which we are now referring, this idea had assumed extraordinary proportions. Israel considered himself as the nation of the Messiah, the future Apostle of humanity. The law will no longer be the exclusive heritage of the house of Jacob, but will become the portion of all mankind.

All the historical monuments of that age prove this mental condition, and the incredible ardor which it imparted to the patriotism and spirit of the nation.

Eighteen centuries of misery, of persecution, and of martyrdom have failed to weaken this sentiment. The Jews have braved the stake and the scaffold, the hatred of kings and peoples, in order to preserve in entire purity the absolute principle of the Unity of God, whence proceed the unity and fraternity of the human race, the unity of law, moral and social.

V.

AT the moment when faith in the future of monotheism and resistance to all that could influence that future, had become the most enthusiastic, Jesus suddenly appeared, and by declaring himself the son of God, and the equal of God, greatly disturbed the unitarian belief of his contemporaries.

This was not only, as we have observed above, a direct violation of the laws of Moses, and of the great revelation of Sinai ; it was also the ruin of the hopes of the Jewish people ; it was a striking contradiction of the world-wide mission which it had assumed.

The astonishment and the indignation with which the Jews who were contemporaries of Jesus were filled, when they heard him first arrogate to himself the prerogatives which could belong only to God, and soon after pretend to a divine origin and nature, may be easily understood. For those thoroughly imbued with that Jewish law, in which it had been said, Ye shall neither add thereto, nor diminish therefrom, could but regard these claims as blasphemy meriting condign punishment. In fact, in the Gospel narrative above quoted, we find that Jesus is reproached by them for blaspheming in pretending to be God and declaring himself the equal of God, when he was but a simple mortal.

It is undeniable that by the proclamation of his divinity, Jesus not only opposed the secular belief of the Jewish people, disturbed all consciences, and denied all received truths, but he also committed a flagrant attack on that law, which he at first solemnly declared he came not to destroy or to modify. It was virtually preaching a new

God, or at any rate, a new system concerning a divinity, a God, or a system, which neither the Jews of his time, nor their fathers had known. Certain miracles would have corroborated in vain this fundamental innovation, this revolution in the belief in One God ; the mosaic law and the national conscience alike unhesitatingly condemned such an attempt.

The following is in reality the unimpeachable text, on which those who prosecuted Jesus and those who, according to the Gospel of St. John, cast stones at him because he declared himself to be God, based their defence :—

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams and giveth thee a sign or wonder, and it come to pass, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him and cleave unto Him; and that prophet shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to you, to turn you away from the Lord your God.”*

It is difficult to be more precise than is the sacred law-giver in the preceding commandment. He ordains that nothing shall impair, nothing shall destroy that doctrine of divine Unity, on which he has based the whole system of the law of Israel and of the future of the entire human race. Inasmuch as he commanded the extermination of the idolatrous nations inhabiting the promised land, in order that the belief in the Unity might not be suppressed at its birth, by contact with, and the example of, Pagan customs, so he condemned to the extreme

* Deuteronomy xiii. 1 to 5.

penalty of the law any man, even were he a prophet, who announced and who preached a God other than Him who had spoken to the Hebrews amidst lightning and thunder, on the Mount Horeb.

This principle acted as powerfully at the time of Jesus, as during the first days of Jewish nationality. In fact from the Gospel narrative itself, it is evident that the Jewish people did not hesitate; no sooner had they heard from the son of Mary a word which involved a pretension to divinity, than a multitude took up stones and sought to stone, in obedience to the precepts of Moses, him whom they regarded as a blasphemer. "We will stone thee for thy blasphemy," exclaimed the assembled Jews, "because being a man thou makest thyself a God."*

"Because being a man thou wouldst make thyself God!" An awful reproach, for it confirms the fact that Jesus had not given to the people any proof of his divinity. He had taken so little trouble to convince the masses, that as we have seen, his disciples themselves abandoned him, and separated themselves from him, as soon as by declaring himself the son and the equal of God, he infringed the sacred doctrine of the absolute Unity and immateriality of the Godhead. He God, cried the people, was not Joseph his father? Was not Mary his mother? And thus on all sides arose a violent protest against him.

That a God who had descended on the earth, incarnated in a human body, to manifest himself to the world and ensure the salvation and the triumph of

* Responderunt ei Judæi : De bono opere non lapidamus te, sed de blasphemîâ, et quia tu, homo cum sis, facis te ipsum Deum.
John x. 33.

Israel, could not, or would not reveal himself more clearly, that he left all his contemporaries in doubt and hesitation, that he did not shine forth in all his glory and power, by one of those great manifestations that at once command belief, is a mystery which we here can neither penetrate, nor comprehend. It doubtless formed a portion of Jesus's design, not to be more explicit; but once more we ask, can the Jewish people be blamed for not having seen what was not shown unto them, and for having obeyed their law of religion, by pursuing and condemning him who based his divinity on his own affirmation alone?

Let us recollect that splendid revelation at Sinai, where the disorder of the elements was but an accompaniment of the divine manifestation, in the presence of a whole nation, struck with fear and awe; let us remember that supernatural voice, resounding amidst wind and storm, and conveying to the ears of the Hebrews, those immortal truths, which are destined one day to illumine all the nations of the earth. Science may explain these miracles; but the immense effect produced by them on the Israelites, cannot be contested, an effect that nothing in the course of ages has impaired or weakened. Was the like observable in the time of Jesus? Was any act of his life marked by so universal and so startling a revelation? All that has been previously advanced presents the answer to this enquiry.

VI.

THE solitude around Jesus became daily more entire; the Apostles only, though disquieted themselves by singular doubts, remained faithful to their master and

his new doctrine. But the entire people, who had hailed his first utterances with such lively sympathy, had now unanimously turned against him. No one in Judea could resolve to see a God in a created being, one apparently having the same nature as the rest of mankind, born of woman, living, eating and drinking, as a simple mortal, subject to all the conditions and to all the sufferings of humanity, known by all as the son of a humble carpenter of Galilee, whose mother, brothers, and sisters, simple and pious people, in no way claimed for their family, any of the glory and power of the Eternal. The Jews at length discovered that his own parents and the majority of his disciples themselves did not believe in the mission of Jesus, far less in his divinity ; how then was it possible, under these various circumstances, that conviction favourable to the son of Mary, could take possession of the national mind ?

But strange and more characteristic were the excessive long-suffering and forbearance, the unconquerable patience, one might almost call it feebleness, with which Jesus endured not only the general incredulity of which he was the object, but also the violence, the obloquy and the blows, with which his most significant actions were received. We have seen, that every time a claim to divinity fell from his lips, the Jews protested against what they called his blasphemy, and even took up stones with which to kill him who made so serious an attack on the faith of Israel. Then, or never, was the time for Jesus to put forth his power, and to arrest by a striking miracle, (since he had the gift of working them,) the efforts of those who assailed him and sought his destruction.

When the inhabitants of Sodom attempted to do

violence to the messenger of the Lord, and to invade the hospitable dwelling of Lot, the angels stretched forth their hands and struck the people blind; and soon after, the fire of Heaven, mingling with the volcanic eruptions of the earth, destroyed and burnt the town and infamous inhabitants. In the desert, when Israel rebelled against the voice of God, or lost faith in His holy promises, fearful chastisements, ministers of eternal justice, visited the guilty people, and the Hebrews seized with terror immediately returned to their allegiance to the law and the will of God.

Nothing of a like character marked the earthly life of Jesus. In vain was he asked for proofs; in vain the people clamoured against him, and in anger proceeded from scepticism to violence, no retributive sign appeared in Heaven, no sudden and supernatural chastisement overtook those who dared to repudiate and stone a God. Jesus escaped from the ire of the people; he fled to Galilee when the populace threatened to precipitate him from the summit of a steep mountain, he fled to the desert, when Herod had him pursued, to put him to death! again he fled, when the plot failed of which the object was to proclaim him king; and once more he fled, when the Jews stoned him, to punish him for having proclaimed himself God.* This system was doubtless pre-arranged by him; it formed a part of his design to refuse the Hebrew people evidences of his divinity, and to exclude that chosen race from the new alliance which he pretended to have brought to earth, and of which

* Quærebant ergo eum apprehendere: *exivit* de manibus eorum, et *abivit* iterum trans Jordanem, in eum locum ubi erat Joanne baptizans primum, et mansit illic.—John x. 39, 40.

nevertheless, they had been the destined heirs since the glorious day of Sinai.

We can only deplore the blindness and the ignorance in which Jesus allowed the Jews to remain, when it would have been so easy for him to effect their conviction.

SEVENTH BOOK.

Conception of the kingdom of God.—Apocalyptic traditions respecting the advent of the divine reign.—Character of the predictions of Jesus on this point.—The kingdom of God according to the doctrines of Judaism, from the human and supernatural points of view.—Superiority of the Jewish doctrine to that of the Gospel.

I.

WHEN Jesus had reached the exact formula of Messianic aspiration, his grand conception was the realisation of the kingdom of God. In the extremely spiritualised development of the Christian doctrine, this idea was made the basis of the new faith, as well as the highest and most glorious title of Christianity, in the eyes of the human race. The reign of God, according to modern interpreters of the Gospel, is the triumph of the principles of justice, love and truth, the complete submission of man to that divine law, which teaches us to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to see in all human beings only brothers, children of the One Father, the advent of peace and fraternity among all the nations of the earth, in one word, according to the beautiful utterances of the prophets, when hearts of flesh shall replace hearts of stone.

But this was not the idea either of Jesus, or of the Apostles. They represented the kingdom of God under a very different aspect; according to them, the advent of the days of Messiah could not be separated from that of the end of the world and the last judgment.

The Gospel leaves no doubt as to this interpretation. Sometimes, it is true, when Jesus was in the presence of the doctors of the Pharisees, he apparently set forth that the reign of God will come without any physical manifestation,* and that from that moment he would be among them ; but the true Messianic doctrine of the son of Mary must not be sought in these evasive answers, which are under another form, but a fresh refusal of explanation and proofs. When alone with his disciples, when he unreservedly revealed to them all that was in his heart, he was much more explicit, and his repeated declarations inspired them with a wholly different belief concerning the advent of the reign of God. This belief rests incontestably on certain mystic ideas which had long previously been current in Judea.

The books of Daniel and Esdras have preserved for us its memory and its formula. It was believed that great convulsions and awful phenomena would precede and announce the reign of the Saints, or as Daniel terms it, “Then the Eternal will appear among the clouds to judge the living and the dead.”

When Jesus’s claim to the Messianic character was complete, he did not hesitate to apply to himself those apocalyptic traditions which were calculated to act powerfully on the public mind by the combined influence of wonder and fear.

II.

The importance of the declaration of Jesus on this subject, is enhanced by the fact that it was to his disciples alone in his most intimate outpourings he taught

* Luke xvii. 20.

the whole of his doctrine, and defined the signal facts which would characterise the divine reign. The picture that the prophet of Galilee traces of the messianic epoch, resembles in fact almost line for line, the one that had been painted by the mystics of Judea. Matthew and Mark agreeing entirely on this head, record his words as follows:—"And there will be at that time fearful calamities, war, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, the abomination of desolation throughout the world." All the mystic terrors announced by Daniel and repeated literally in the gospel narrative, will be realised and the days will be accomplished. For, as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the son of man be. In those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from Heaven, and then shall appear the sign of the son of man in Heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other. When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and he shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the formation of the world.' Then shall he say unto them on his left hand, 'Depart from me ye cursed, into

everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.*

III.

THE prophecies respecting the kingdom of God possess no great novelty of expression. They are almost all copied from the Jewish Apocalypics; the Apocalypse of John especially has drawn still more extensively on the book of Daniel.

Neither is there the least doubt as to the character which Jesus and his Apostles attributed to this fearful epoch. All the declarations of the master of the Gospel were accepted in their most literal sense. Jesus announced the end of the world by also declaring himself to be the Messiah predestined to judge the living and the dead. The New Testament teems with declarations and parables which announce this great event to be at hand; in one passage, the master even assures his listeners, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, until all these things shall come to an end."†

Besides, if it was allowable, in opposition to the evidence given by the texts, to attribute a mysterious and symbolical sense to the promises of Jesus, it is undeniable that neither the disciples, nor the earliest church accepted this interpretation.

As we have said above, his twelve apostles frequently enquired of him, "Will all this happen in our days, master?"‡ After his death, they were in daily expecta-

* Matt. xxv. 31 and following.

† Matthew xxiii. 36; Mark xiii. 30.

‡ See in reference in page 77 the texts quoted.

tion of his second advent. The Apocalypse of John, which is but a prophetic development of the messianic idea of Jesus, fixes the year 71 of the new era, as that of the coming of the kingdom of Heaven ; and this expectation was universally diffused in the earliest Christian period. When a mortal blow had been given later, as years rolled on, to these first hopes, the fulfilment of the prophecies of Christ was assumed to be postponed for a thousand years. The millennium found favour and acceptance in the church, and the historians of the age testify to the universal excitement prevailing throughout the Christian world, at the approach of this awful date of the year 1,000, which according to Christian tradition, was to be the herald of the last days of the human race on earth.

IV.

ALL those fatal years, anxiously expected and dreaded at one and the same time, have sunk successively into the bosom of time. The sign of the son of man has not shone forth in the heavens ; the promised Messiah has not appeared in the skies, amid the war of the elements, as in the days of Sinaic revelation ; the dead have remained extended in their sepulchres, and the earth still awaits the awful moment of the last judgment.

But though these material signs have not been accomplished, humanity has nevertheless pursued its onward march towards the ideal of justice and of truth which dwelleth in God. A new moral world has succeeded to the ancient world, and Christianity, as we shall presently show, has played a vast and providential part in this renovation of pagan society. The kingdom of God approaches each day to its fulfilment, or rather the peoples

march towards that kingdom, by means of the progress, liberty, and development of the sacred principles of universal morality, which is a splendid manifestation of the divinity present in the mind of man, and in the movements of the whole human race.

V.

LET us further ascertain the sort of influence that the ideas of Jesus regarding the characteristics of the messianic era and the signs announcing it, exerted on his contemporaries, if, and this is doubtful, those ideas were known to them.

They could have served but to confirm the incredulity and the mistrust with which the new prophet had previously inspired the Jews. As, in declaring himself the equal of God, he had attacked their unitarian belief, so in uttering his messianic predictions, he had impugned all their traditions; and herein he professed, as we can demonstrate, a far less generous, a far less liberal, and above all, a far less civilising doctrine than that held by the prophets of Israel and the fathers of the Synagogue.

The principal point in which Jesus swerved from the Jewish teachings on this important question was this: "The kingdom of God," said he, "was not of this world," and thus, by a logical sequence, he came to deny the advent of the kingdom of Heaven at the end of time.

Such was not the Jewish belief. Neither the Pentateuch nor the Bible contains a word which admits even of the supposition, that a day will come when a purely celestial and spiritual empire will replace this earthly and material globe. The doctrine to be evolved from all the ideas of the great Hebrew legislator is, that the kingdom of God is of this world, where Eternal providence is un-

ceasingly active, everywhere present, everywhere vigilant, everywhere helpful. Man bears about with him, in his soul and in his conscience, the divine ideal, for he is himself created in the image of God, and the whole aim of his being should consist in this, to make his will conform to that of his divine model. He shall be holy, for God is holy ; he shall be just, for God is just ; he shall be good and merciful, for the mercy of God is infinite. But to elevate himself towards God, he has only to appeal to his intelligence, and his reason. "For this commandment which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off ; it is not in Heaven that thou shouldest say, who shall go up unto Heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it ? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it ? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil."*

Such is the ever present doctrine of Judaism. Man, by virtue of his own efforts can raise himself towards his God ; he needs neither mediator nor Messiah in order to win for himself a place in the kingdom of Heaven ; he may ascend by his own endeavour alone, the steps of that mysterious ladder, of which the dream of Jacob is a magnificent symbol.

With the messianic era as promised to Israel by Moses and all the prophets, nothing supernatural is combined. Its first element is the redemption and the triumph of the chosen people when relieved from their trials, their national authority and their sovereign independence

* Deuteronomy xxx. 11-15.

are re-established ; but its other and most significant feature is to be the felicity of the whole human race, when the nations shall not know war any more, and united by love, shall have but one love and faith, One God. Israel is the only people who associated with their own future, the future of all the other peoples of the world, and with the triumph of their principles, the triumph of the good, the true, the beautiful, in all countries, and under all climes.*

The superiority of this noble doctrine to that of Jesus is clearly perceptible. When the son of Mary announced fearful calamities only, the Jews expected on the contrary a period of universal tranquillity and harmony. He foretold war, massacres, strife and discord among nations, and in the very hearts of families. The Jews, on the contrary, hoped that "the wolf would lie down with the lamb, and that swords would be turned into pruning-hooks." He painted the end of humanity amid the convulsions and throes of the elements, physical and moral ; the Jews, on the contrary, described the golden age which pagan mythology placed at the opening of creation, as occurring at the last period of human existence, and they were convinced that ideas of justice and fraternity would, in the end, triumph over the passions and the weaknesses of humanity.

"The Gospel of the kingdom" offered to the Jews as "good tidings," was evidently, in this respect, wholly devoid of the beauty and grandeur of their traditional dogma.

* We quoted at the commencement of this treatise, the prophetic texts to which we refer our readers, which trace the magnificent picture of the Messianic period.

VI.

YET, even in the traditions of the Synagogue, the advent of the reign of God was clothed partially in supernatural and legendary garments, and Daniel exercised an influence on the Jewish mystics, analogous to that which he appears to have had on the mind of the Galilean reformer.

In those marvellous narratives whence early Christianity and the editors of the gospels evidently drew many of their legends, the messianic era is also depicted as coeval with the end of ages. There exists a number of *aggadoths** that were current in the schools of Judea, in which the signs which will precede and follow this grandest of epochs, are minutely indicated. Let us compare some of these with the predictions of the Gospels; we shall then perceive how far superior they are, in a moral and religious point of view, to the appalling teachings of Jesus upon the last judgment.

In the Gospel, the son of man ascending to the throne of justice, is to separate, for eternity, the good from the bad; the first are to enjoy eternal bliss, the others are to be eternally damned.

Thence has resulted the despairing doctrine in the Christian world, of eternal punishment, which has much relation to the Pagan doctrines of infernal chastisement, but which is so widely removed from the merciful principles of Judaism. The following, on the contrary, are

* The Aggados were marvellous stories closely allied to gnosticism and cabbalacism, and forming a species of recreation in the great Jewish academies and schools. The doctors of the Talmud generally expressed great contempt for these inconsistent tales; but even in them, lofty moral principles are frequently to be met with.

the consolatory promises given in the legends of the synagogue :—

“ When the messianic age arrives,” says Talkut Jesaia,* “*Amen* will resound from gulf to gulf in the depths of the abyss, and all sinners undergoing punishment will be forgiven.

“ Then, the Eternal ascends His immortal throne. The heavenly hosts are before Him, the sun and the planets to His right, the moon and the stars to His left.

“ The divine voice is heard proclaiming the Messianic law. The prophet Zeroubabel rises and exclaims : ‘ May the name of the Lord be praised and sanctified.’

“ These words are re-echoed from one extremity of the universe to the other, and all mortals answer : ‘ *Amen* ;’ and even the ungodly among the Hebrews, who are enduring punishment, and the Gentiles, who have not expiated their faults, reply, ‘ *Amen*.’

“ This Amen ascends from the depths to the celestial throne. And the Eternal saith : ‘ These unhappy ones have suffered enough ; their sins were but the result of the temptations of the spirit of evil.’ Then the Eternal delivers the keys of the pit to the angels Michael and Gabriel, and celestial messengers depart on the wings of the wind.

“ Thus the eight thousand doors of the infernal regions are immediately opened. As a friend raises from the earth a fallen friend, so the angels affectionately lead Jews and Gentiles ; they wash them, purify them, heal their wounds, clothe them in spotless garments, and surrounded by legions of the blessed, conduct them to the presence of the Eternal.

* Talkut Isaia, p. 41, 1.—I borrow these important quotations from the beautiful collection of Jewish parables, which I have already mentioned, by Professor Joseph Levy.

"They lead the Hebrews who, thus purified, become again like unto pious and holy men; they lead even the idolators who, in consequence of their justice, were as he priests of God on the earth.

"And the Eternal saith: 'Let them all draw near, and contemplate My glory.'

"And all prostrate themselves before the immortal throne, and the voices of the blessed join in praising the Almighty."

VII.

We need not enlarge on the moral grandeur of this legend, one popular in Israel at the time even of the second temple.

As in the domain of society, Israel does not separate the idea of his triumph and the advent of Messiah from the happiness of all other peoples, so in the domain of the supernatural, he does not divide the eternal beatitude which he expects in a future state, from the equal beatitude of Gentiles and idolators. Infinite pardon will wipe out all faults, and sin will be no more.

Thus, while the Gospel writes on the gates of the infernal regions, the terrible words of Dante, "Hope not," Israel inscribes thereon, "Hope and redemption for everyone"

And this is not an isolated doctrine; it is truly the belief of the whole Jewish people, even as it existed at the time when Jesus appeared. In all the traditions, and under all forms, traces and proofs of this fact abound.

Ten things, exclaims the writer of the Raboths,* will distinguish the messianic times from our times. "The

* Another collection of Haggadoths, or Talmudic legends, page 131, xi.

light of the sun will be centuplicated, inexhaustible springs of water will flow from Jerusalem, and will prove sources of health and strength to all mankind ; trees will bear fruit a thousand times more abundant ;—all terrestrial ruins will be repaired ;—Jerusalem will be rebuilt ;—peace will reign among the fiercest animals ;—harmony will be restored between Israel and all other peoples ;—groans and tears will cease throughout the world ;—death will be swallowed up ;—joy will break forth universally.”

We read elsewhere :—

“ Three days before the great redemption of Israel, the prophet Elijah will appear on the mountains of the holy land, and will exclaim weeping, ‘ How long will the days of thy mourning endure ? ’

“ Then the first day he will proclaim with a loud voice, ‘ Peace comes to earth ! Peace comes to earth ! ’ AND THE WICKED THEMSELVES will rejoice.

“ The second day he will exclaim, ‘ Happiness descends on earth ! Happiness descends on earth ! ’ And the wicked themselves will thrill with joy.

“ The third day he will exclaim, ‘ Salvation descends on earth ! Salvation descends on earth ! And the wicked themselves will be happy.

“ And Elijah will add, ‘ This is the reign of thy God. ’ ”*

Thus the advent of the Messiah and the inauguration of the kingdom of Heaven are for Israel the close of all suffering on earth, the annihilation of all coming evil. It is peace and harmony among men, eternal bliss in Heaven.

The advent of this mysterious epoch, according to the Gospel, is to take place only amidst war, convulsions and

* Talkout Isaiah, p. 53, xi.

raging pestilence ; the eternal perdition of the bad is its result.

According to the traditions of Israel, a revival of the golden age, of the original Eden, joy, redemption of the living and the dead, unlimited pardon, and eternal happiness are its features.

The gloomy doctrine of Jesus on this point, was not only opposed to all the hopes of the Synagogue, but it involved intolerance and despair, while the Jewish doctrine was toleration and love.

Thus it will be easily understood that far from its being a proof in the eyes of the Jewish people, of the messianic character and of the divinity of the son of Mary, it was calculated, on the contrary, to confirm their doubts and incredulity.

EIGHTH BOOK.

Jesus forsaken.—Order for his detention.—He is betrayed by Judas.—His apprehension.—Personal violence of the Roman soldiers.—St. Peter's denial.—Examination of Jesus.—Preparation for his trial and sentence.—Jesus before Pilate.—Appeal to the people.—Barabbas.—Predictions of Jesus concerning his condemnation and death.—Execution of Jesus.—Cruelty of the Roman executioners.—Last entreaties of the Jews.—Last words of Jesus.—His death.

I.

WE now approach the close of that career whose social action was but of a few years' duration. We have followed the new doctrine in all the essential phases of its development. We have seen Jesus, who at first in his famous sermon on the mount, seemed to be only a great social and moral reformer, aspire to take the sacred title of Messiah and of son of David. As a natural consequence of this ambition, which proves that at that time he, like all other Hebrews, had interpreted the power of the saviour of Israel in a material sense, he was on the point of declaring himself king. Finally, indulging in ever loftier aspirations, he openly declared himself the son of God and God himself. But every time that the people and the chiefs gathered around him and entreated him no longer to allow their minds to remain in suspense, but at once to show them the revealing sign by which they could recognise and adore him, he answered them only with expressions of contempt, and gross insults, and he left them more uncertain and more incredulous than before.

It will be remembered, that notwithstanding the danger to which his exciting utterances might have exposed public order, notwithstanding the legitimate indignation felt by the magistrates and functionaries, who were the objects of the prophet of Galilee's daily attacks, his arrest had not been ventured on, for fear of exciting a revolt among the people, who were evidently favorably disposed towards him. But when, from the change in the sentiments of the masses, all cause of apprehension ceased, the guardians of the law of Israel considered they were no longer justified in permitting the actions and the words of Jesus; above all, they deemed it to be their duty to suppress, in its germ, a religious doctrine which, by propounding the idea of a God in a human form, inflicted a serious blow on monotheism—the first principle, the strength, and the future of Israel.

By the universal consciousness, which makes daily progress towards the luminous doctrine of the DIVINE UNITY, it will ere long be decided, whether or not they were justified in this; but from the point of view of the mosaic faith, of that faith which governed Judea, according to the spirit and the letter of the Code of Sinai, they had the indisputable right to apply to the case of Jesus, the penal statutes cited in the preceding chapter. Thus they decided to have done with this religious and political reformer, who was ever exciting agitation among the people and disquiet in the popular mind, and this too, at a moment when the closest union among all the citizens was so necessary for the defence of the common country against the Roman invasion, as well as for the protection of the religion of the Unity against the contagion of the polytheistic observances of Rome, the mistress of the world.

On this occasion, they found willing co-adjutors in Herod, and in the representatives of the Roman empire. Herod, as we have said, had persecuted Jesus with the intention of putting him to death, and he owed his safety only to the merciful warning of the Pharisees.* Besides, the attempt of which the object was to make him king, must have naturally rendered inimical to him, the chief of the Jewish state and the agents of Roman authority. In this combination of circumstances, there was more than sufficient cause for his being condemned in accordance with the existing law.

By the aid of treason, it was not difficult to get possession of his person.

The name of Judas Iscariot must remain for ever blighted on the page of history and of morality ; but even under other circumstances, Jesus, having but twelve apostles as protectors and followers, evidently could not have long eluded the search of those deputed to seize him.

It is but too certain, that in this final emergency, he delivered himself up to his pursuers, and that he expected, from reasons which it is here useless to investigate, that from his own punishment would result the final triumph of the work he had undertaken.

He had, in fact, frequently announced to his intimate friends the necessity for his condemnation and his death, in order to ensure the success and the fulfilment of his mission here below. We have seen above, that when he first revealed his intention of accomplishing this painful sacrifice, Peter sought to dissuade him with tears and supplications, and that he indignantly replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art

* Luke xiii. 31.

an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.* On other and similar occasions, he was still more explicit. When some generous Pharisees came to warn him that Herod had resolved to put him to death, and persuaded him to escape, he replied that he consented at once to quit Galilee, but that he would go to Jerusalem, that he might be perfected, for, added he, a prophet cannot perish out of Jerusalem.† And soon after, taking his twelve apostles aside, he said, "We are going to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the son of man shall be accomplished."‡

It is a singular circumstance that the evangelist who records these words, adds, "And the twelve apostles understood none of these things."§

Another day he said to them, "Therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my father."|| These sayings, it must be remembered, caused those who heard him to exclaim,

* Matthew xvi. 23.

† Et ait illis. . . . Tertiâ die consummor, verumtamen oportet me hodie et cras et sequenti die ambulare, quia non caput prophetam perire extra Jerusalem.—Luke xiii. 32 and following.

‡ Assumpsit autem Jesus duodecim et ait illis: Ecce ascendimus Jerosolymam et consummabuntur omnia quæ scripta sunt per prophetas de Filio hominis. Occident eum et tertiâ die resurget.—Luke xviii. 31 and following.

|| Et ipsi nihil horum intellexerunt, et erat verbum illud absconditum ab eis, et non intelligebant quæ dicebantur. Luke xviii. 34.

¶ Propterea me diligit Pater: Quia ego pono animam meam ut iterum sumam eam. Nemo tollit eam a me, sed ego pono eam a meipso. Hoc mandatum accepi a Patre meo. John x. 17-18.

“He is mad, why hear ye him.”* His disciples vainly endeavoured to prevent him returning to Jerusalem. “And (said they), Master, the Jews have lately sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?”† Nothing could influence the will of the son of Mary, he returned to Judea.

Certainly, after all that had happened ; after the violent attacks on the chiefs of the people ; after the prosecution, publicly and repeatedly ordered by Herod in Galilee, and by the magistrates in Judea ; after the violent outbreak of the popular feeling, excited to such an extent, that the reformer of Nazareth risked being stoned ; it was not necessary to be a great prophet, amid these concurrent evidences of public opinion and public authority, to foresee that Jesus on his return to Jerusalem would, according to the laws of his country and his time, be immediately arrested, tried, and sentenced.

Let us disregard all that may be considered as human and even voluntary in this prediction of his death, and let us consider it only under the supernatural view attributed to it by the Evangelists. What is involved in this cruel necessity, so clearly affirmed by Jesus, in this fatal destiny which induced him to choose Jerusalem as the scene where this bloody sacrifice should be enacted, and the Jews as the instruments of his death ? What was to be the result of this *divine commandment* which he declared himself prepared to obey, and which compelled him to lay down his earthly life ? Are not all, judge, victim, and executioner, the unresisting instruments, the

* Dicebant autem multi : Dæmonium habet et insanit ; quid eum auditis ? John x. 20.

§ Deinde post hæc dixit discipulis suis : Eamus in Judæam iterum. Dicunt ei discipuli : Rabbi, nunc quærebant te Judæi lapidare et iterum vadis illuc ? John xi. 7 and following.

irresponsible agents, the blind and hapless victims of the irresistible will of a God whose terrible and mysterious designs, nothing could counteract, nothing could avert.

And what would have happened if the Jews, in pursuance of the advice of those who declared that "Jesus was mad* and was not to be heeded," had met his violent utterances merely with indifference and contempt, and had abstained either from prosecuting or condemning him? With the disproof of the prediction by the event, all pretension to prophecy and divinity would have vanished, and christianity would have been stifled in the germ.

Events, however, did not take this course. Jesus was considered to be simply a dangerous revolutionist, whose words sowed dissension among the people and threatened to compromise the safety of Israel in the presence of the Roman invasion.† The world had not then learnt, that an idea is not stifled by the death of one man, and that the blood of great reformers is fertile in disciples and (if they are needed) in martyrs.

II.

At this crisis began a period of painful suffering to the son of Mary.

At the moment of his seizure by the soldiers commanded to arrest him, all his disciples, instead of claiming the glory of dying with him, abandoned him, and

* John x. 20.

† Collegerunt ergo Pontifices et Pharisei concilium et dicebant. . . . Si dimittimus eum omnes credent in eum, et venient Romani et tollent nostrum locum et gentem. Unus autem ex ipsis Caiphas nomine, cum esset Pontifex anni illius dixit eis: Vos nescitis quidquam: ne cogitatis quia expedit vobis, *ut unus moriatur homo pro populo, et non tota gens pereat.* John i. 47.

took to flight.* His well-beloved disciple Simon-Peter, he to whom he had promised the throne of the universal Church, he, this Peter, denied him three several times, while his master was groaning in prison, exposed to the insults of the Roman soldiers. This moral weakness, this shameful desertion must have been more painful to the heart of Jesus than the tortures he was about to endure.

Meanwhile Jesus was conducted before the chief Jewish tribunal, where presided the high priest, the princes, the scribes, and the elders of Israel, and then began his examination. Witnesses were called† who must have been numerous; for the deeds and words of Jesus had been done and spoken in the presence of the public. Two serious enquiries were entered upon; two counts of indictment (to use law terms) were produced. The one referred to the religious, the other to the political aspect of his misdemeanours. Jesus was accused of having violated the law of Israel in declaring himself the Son of God; he was also accused of having sought to overturn the established authorities, and to usurp the sovereign power in their place. The first of these offences came under the jurisdiction of the Hebrew Sanhedrin, the second under that of Herod, or Pontius Pilate, then invested with all political power in Judea.

The Gospel proves that the trial instituted before the Sanhedrin was accompanied by all the formalities customary on those occasions.§

* Tunc discipuli ejus, *relinquentes eum, omnes* tugerunt. Marc. xiv.

† Mark xiv. 63.

‡ Mark xiv. 53 and following.

§ It is superfluous for us to dwell on the judicial portion of the trial of Jesus. The question of legality has no relation to the purpose of this treatise. What, in fact, could we advance, after the

After the examination of the witnesses whose depositions were more or less concurrent, the High Priest rising in the midst of the assembly questioned Jesus,* saying, "Thou repliest nothing to that which these testify against thee," but he held his peace and answered nothing.† Again the High Priest said unto him, "Is it true that thou art the Christ?" He replied, "If I say I am, you will not believe me; but you shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven." Then the judges replied, "Then thou art the son of God," and he replied, "Thou hast said it, I am." Then the High Priest said, "What need we other witnesses? Ye have heard the *blasphemy* he has uttered; what think ye?" Then they all condemned him to be guilty of death.‡

But subsequently to the Roman conquest, the Jews had had no right to execute public sentences without the previous authorisation of the prætor. Therefore after

important labours of Mr. Salvador on this serious question? ("Institutions of Moses and the Hebrew people and the Reply of M. Dupin."

* Et convenientia testimonia non erant. Mark xiv. 56, 59.

† Et exurgens summus sacerdos in medium interrogavit Jesum dicens: Non ne respondes quidquam ad ea quæ tibi obijciuntur ab his? ille autem tacebat et nihil respondit. Mark xiv. 60, 61.

‡ Et ut factus est dies . . . duxerunt in consilium suum. Rursum summus sacerdos interrogabat eum et dixit ei. Tu est Christus?—et ait illis: Si vobis dixero, non credetis mihi . . . videbitis Filium hominis sedentem a dextris virtutis Dei et venientem cum nubibus cæli. Dixerunt autem omnes: Tu ergo es filius Dei? Qui ait: vos dicitis, *quia ego sum*. Summus autem sacerdos scindens vestimenta sua, ait: Quid adhuc desideremus testes? Audistis blasphemiam; quid vobis videtur? Qui omnes condemnaverunt eum esse reum mortis. Compare Luke xxiii. passim: and Mark xiv. 60 and following.

sentence was pronounced, the members of the chief tribunal caused Jesus to be led before Pontius Pilate. The second count of the indictment which referred to the attempt of Jesus to cause himself to be proclaimed King of the Jews, had then to be decided. Thus the questions discussed before the Roman Pontiff were exclusively political.

The Jews who appeared before Pilate on this occasion, stated to him that Jesus excited the people to revolt by the doctrine which he disseminated in Judea, and that he perverted the nation by calling himself king and Christ.* Pilate interrogated Jesus saying, "Is it true that thou art king of the Jews?"† and Jesus replied, "You have said it, I am." But the Prætor, notwithstanding so categorical an answer, did not seem to entertain much apprehension of the risk to which this claim might expose the Roman power. He, on the contrary, evinced a kindly purpose towards him.‡ The violence of the popular feeling against Jesus, however, speedily overcame his scruples. The people assembled at the doors of the palace cried out, "Take him, take him, crucify him, crucify him, he must be punished."§ "We have a law, and by our law he is worthy of death because he has made himself the son of God."|| Still Pontius Pilate

* Duxerunt eum ad Pilatum et cœperunt illum accusare dicentes: Hunc invenimus subvertentem gentem nostram . . . et dicentem se Christum regem esse . . . Commovet populum docens per universum Judæum. Luke xxiii. 1 and following.

† Pilatus autem interrogavit eum dicens: Tu es rex Judæorum? At ille respondens ait: Tu dicis. Luke xxiii. 3; John xviii. 33.

‡ Luke xxiii. ; John xviii. ; Matt. xxvii. ; Mark xv. passim.

§ Luke xxiii. 21 and following.

|| Responderunt ei Judæi: Nos legem habemus, et secundem legem debet mori, *quia* Filium Dei se facit. John xix. 7.

hesitated, and made a last effort on behalf of Jesus. It was customary, at the season of the Passover, to pardon one criminal, and he therefore proposed to the Jews to choose whether Jesus or Barabbas, a man in prison for having committed a murder during a popular tumult, should be the one to whom pardon should be granted.* But the people with one accord demanded that Barabbas should be pardoned, and that Jesus should be put to death.

In opposition to this determined and unanimous popular wish, Pilate hesitated no longer; he delivered over Jesus to the Roman soldiers for execution, in pursuance of the sentence passed upon him.

We have now reached a solemn and painful moment; the passion of Jesus was completed in all its most sorrowful and lamentable reality. The hour had come for him to die and to disappear from this world. At this last moment would some decisive revelation burst upon the sight of the people? And would the god thus iniquitously condemned, appear suddenly in his glory and strike his judges and executioners with stupefaction and terror? The Gospel furnishes us with an answer to this question.

III.

WE have never been able to read unmoved, the account given in the narrative of the four evangelists, of the execution of the sentence of death pronounced on Jesus. All the insults and tortures by which the horror of his

* John calls Barabbas a thief, but wrongly. ("Erat autem Barabbas latro.") Mark and Luke say very clearly that he was a seditious character who had committed a murder in a popular riot. Qui erat propter seditionem quandam factam in civitate et homicidium missus in carcerem. Luke xxiii. 19; Mark xv. 7.

punishment was aggravated ; the crown of thorns piercing his brow ; the blows showered on him ; the indignities which polluted his countenance ; his weary ascent to the place of execution, on that mount Calvary, on which he was destined to perish, placed between two thieves ; the vinegar and gall with which, by a refinement of cruelty, his parched lips were moistened, and the wound dealt him in the side by the lance of a brutal soldier. But let us once for all, here distinctly repudiate any complicity of the Jewish people in all these atrocities. The Gospel itself, more equitable than those whose law it has become, declares that these Romans were the sole perpetrators of these acts of barbarity which were among their customs and were commonly practised by the imperial people. As for the Jews, the part acted by them in this fearful drama, was limited according to the showing of the Gospel, to the utterance of a few words, which far from being spoken in derision, as the apostles assume, were on the contrary a last appeal addressed by the popular voice to him as Christ and the son of God.

Jesus was extended on a cross, a mode of punishment imported by the Romans into Judæa. One of the two thieves, who had been condemned to the same fearful expiation of their crimes, cursed him, exclaiming, "If thou art indeed the Christ, deliver thyself and save us with thee."* Then voices were heard from among the crowd, saying, "If he is truly the son of God, let him come down from the cross ;" other voices rejoined, "Yea, let him descend from the cross, and we will believe in him." If God then verily loves him, let Him

* Unus autem [de] his qui pendebant latronibus, blasphemabat eum dicens : Si tu es Christus, salvum fac teipsum et nos. Luke xxiii. 39.

deliver him now, since he said, "I am the son of God."*

This language is wonderfully characteristic of the mental condition of the Jews at that period. Unlike the fierce Roman soldiery, they offer no violence, no insults, to Jesus; they once more and for the last time conjure him to reveal his power as Messiah and the son of God by some striking sign; they promise *to believe in him*, unreservedly, if at this last crisis he will deign to grant them the decisive proofs that they have so long and so vainly solicited.

And in truth, how profound would have been the impression produced on the assembled Jews and Pagans, if, raising himself suddenly in all the splendour of his divinity, he had snapped asunder the nails which fastened him to the cross, as though they had been glass, and had descended from the infamous gibbet unscathed and unwounded; thus striking his executioners with awe, and assuming, in the dazzled sight of all beholders, a halo of celestial brilliancy and eternal majesty! Would there have been a single man in Israel, would there have been a single Roman capable of withstanding the might of this astounding revelation? And how many centuries of martyrdom, of struggle, of fratricidal war, of persecution and of calamity would have been spared to the Christians of the early church and to the Jews throughout their dispersions; the former, victims of the incredulity and the opposition of the Roman world—the latter, victims of an implacable hatred, which eighteen centuries of suffering and exile have not sufficed to appease!

* Et dicentes . . . si filius Dei es, decende de cruce . . . Descendat runc de cruce, *et credimus ei*. Confidit in Deo; liberet nunc, si vult, cum; dixit enim: Quia filius Dei sum. Matt. xxvii. 40.

Yes! the solemn appeal made by the Jewish people to Jesus on the cross, was the sincere and enthusiastic cry of the popular conscience. Yes! the entire people and their chiefs would have rejoiced at the appearance and manifestation of that startling miracle, of that much-desired Messiah, the promised liberator, the glory and salvation of Israel!

IV.

UNFORTUNATELY this crowning proof, all powerful as it would have been, was denied them. Jesus died as all men die, and the very last words he uttered before he expired, were calculated yet more completely (had this been possible), to annihilate any belief in his divinity in the minds of the people. It was about the ninth hour, says the gospel, that Jesus uttered a loud cry, saying, *Ali, ali, mana sabactani*, which signifies, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.”* This exclamation was doubtless understood by those who heard it in its simple and natural sense; since it excluded and nullified all notion of a divine nature. For, in declaring himself forsaken of God Himself, did he not virtually deny his own participation in the divine nature, in the essence and power of the Eternal? Did he not even deny any share in the inspiration and in the authority emanating from, and appertaining to, the Deity? Never did Moses, never did any of the prophets betray such dark despair, such failing hope.

At this awful moment the Hebrews must have felt more than ever convinced of the justice of the sentence

* *Et circa horam nonam clamavit Jesus voce magna dicens: Eli, Eli, lamma Sabactani? Hoc est; Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me? Matt. xxvii. 46.*

pronounced on the son of Mary. They no longer hesitated to class him with the crowd of pseudo-prophets and false messiahs who had long previously successively arisen in Israel, morbidly exciting popular passions, without any benefit arising therefrom.

The master of the Gospel pronounced, before breathing his last, a sublime axiom which ought to have been regarded as a command by his disciples, an expression which throws much light on the mental condition of the people, his contemporaries. "My Father," he exclaims, "my Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*

They know not what they do ; an irrefutable truth, coming from the conscience of the Galilean reformer, at the last moment of his life. Yes ! the Jews verily knew not what they did. They could not know, for nothing had disclosed it to them, that they had sentenced a prophet to death, a Messiah ! a God ! No ! they knew not what they did ; and therefore not knowing, in virtue of what law could they be pronounced guilty of Deicide, which imputation has served as an iniquitous pretext for eighteen centuries of relentless persecution ?

But he whom they condemned to this last bitter anguish, gentle and merciful in the hour of dissolution, besought his God thus, "My Father, pardon them, for they know not what they do." Yet, far from *pardoning*, the followers of the great and crucified reformer have vowed a pitiless, undying hatred against the Hebrew people, the blind and unconscious instruments of the decree of the Eternal, a hatred to which millions of innocent Jews have been sacrificed. Thus have they

* Jesus autem dicebat : Pater dimitte illis, *Non enim sciunt quid faciunt.* Luke xxiii. 34.

expiated the pretended crime of their ancestors, perishing by thousands at the stake, in gigantic massacres, in hecatombs of victims, amid the wrath and the scorn of their persecutors.

Alas ! for the dark passions of humanity ! Alas ! for the despotism of wordly interest ! Alas ! for the cruel violation of the holy law of mercy, charity, and love !

NINTH BOOK.

Resurrection of Jesus.—His interment by Joseph Aramatheus.—Application of the Pharisees to Pilate.—The resurrection of Jesus occurs unseen by witnesses.—Public opinion concerning his disappearance.—Events posterior to the resurrection.—Discrepancies in the narratives of the Evangelists.—Jesus appears to Mary and to several of his disciples, without being recognised.—Doubts of the apostles.—The episode of Emmaus.—General observations.

I.

ALL was thus accomplished ; Jesus was no more ; Christianity was about to arise. But a final manifestation was to be made, before the founder of the new doctrine disappeared for ever from this world.

It will be remembered that when Jesus was pressed by the Pharisees to show them a revealing sign of his mission, he had replied that the only sign to be accorded to them was that of the prophet Jonas ; that is to say, inasmuch as the prophet Jonas remained three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so the “Son of Man” would remain three days and three nights buried in the bosom of the earth, and would arise on the third day.* This prediction had the disadvantage of post-

* Quidam de Scribis et Pharisæis dicentes : Magister, volumus a te signum videre. Qui respondens ait illis : Generatio mala et adultera signum quærit, et non dabitur ei, nisi signum Jonæ prophetæ. Sicut enim fuit Jonas in ventre ceti, tribus diebus et tribus noctibus, sic erit Filius hominis in corde terræ tribus diebus et tribus noctibus.—Matthew xii, 38 and following ; Ibid. xvi. 1 and following ; Luke xi. 29.

poning to a period posterior to his death, the proof of his mission and of thus leaving the Hebrew people in a very natural condition of uncertainty. But at length, this striking resurrection occurring in the sight of the whole nation, this victory over death would have afforded to all incontrovertible proof.

The Gospel has preserved important details respecting this closing period of the connection of Jesus with the visible world.

It is certainly difficult to perceive any agreement in the accounts given by the four Evangelists of the resurrection. We will confine ourselves to the various signs which are severally related by the Evangelists, concerning this important fact; and we will then consider whether, in the eyes of the contemporaries, its reality could be unhesitatingly accepted.

The four sacred biographies of Jesus agree on two points; his interment and the disappearance of his body from the sepulchre in which it had been deposited. But not one says a single word as to the circumstances themselves, by which its disappearance was attended. The following, however, is their simple narrative.

They all relate that as soon as Jesus expired, Joseph of Arimathæa, who was secretly one of his disciples, went to Pilate and asked for the corpse in order to bury it; and this request was granted.* Then he placed it without help, according to St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke, or, according to St. John,† assisted by Nicodemus, in a vault that he had hewn out in the rock, and after rolling a large stone to the door of the sepulchre

* Matthew xxvii. 57, 58.

† Ibid. 59 sq. Mark xv. 46. Luke xxiii. 53. John xix. 39, 40.

he departed.* No one was called to be a witness of this funeral ceremony, which, after an ignominious death, and under the painful circumstances amid which it was performed, was of course necessarily secret and devoid of all pomp. Was Jesus really put into the tomb here described? The evangelists unanimously state that he was; and there is nothing to deter us from accepting their testimony without reserve.

What occurred in the night between Friday and Saturday which followed this interment? All the evangelists observed the strictest silence on this matter, leaving free scope to the hypothesis of future ages and to the criticisms of the adversaries of Christianity. The latter, in fact, have not failed to suggest that those interested in diffusing the belief in Jesus' resurrection, had during this interval more than necessary time for removing his body from the sepulchre in which Joseph of Arimathæa had placed it.

However this may have been, it was only on the following day† that the Pharisees sent to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said when he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest the disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead:' so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, 'Ye have a watch, go your way and make it

* Et posuit illud in monumento suo novo quod exciderat in petra, et advolvit saxum magnum ad ostium monumenti, et abiit.—Matt. xxvii. 60.

† Altera autem die, quæ est post Parasceven, convenerunt principes sacerdotum et pharisæi ad Pilatum, etc.—Matthew xxvii. 62 sq.

as sure as ye can.'” Though this precaution was taken too late, they went, sealed the stone and set a watch there.*

We must here remark that Matthew is the sole reporter of this proceeding on the part of the Pharisees, and of the presence of Jewish sentinels at Jesus's tomb on the second day after the burial. Mark, Luke, and John, saying not a word on the matter, have thus caused many doubts to arise as to the truth of the incident.

Whether guarded or not, the tomb is not the scene of any characteristic event; nothing supernatural occurred there during the succeeding day.

The first day of the week was at hand, it was the moment at which the divine miracle was to shine forth, when the God confined in the dark sepulchre was to break the bonds of death and ascend in his ineffable glory towards the heavens opening to receive him. The world was to witness this sublime transfiguration, when Jesus divested of the last earthly ties, was to reveal himself in his celestial majesty and by the splendour of his triumph to compel those to adore him as a God who, during his human existence, had disputed his divinity.

I seek in vain in the Gospel for the record of the moment when this miracle occurred, and for the incidents amid which it was fulfilled. Reference to it is nowhere to be found. The evangelists dwell only on the events posterior to the disappearance of the body of Jesus. As for the resurrection itself, it took place apparently unobserved by any witness: neither the sentinels guarding the tomb, nor the disciples of Jesus, be-

* Matthew xxvii. 66.

held it with their own eyes; and they were consequently unable to testify to its attendant incidents.

Thus, the event which Jesus had predicted, and had announced as an irrefutable sign, his resurrection from the dead, was not followed by any public manifestation. The unrecognised and crucified God, after having during his brief existence on this earth, so often refused to vouchsafe to the Hebrews evident proof of his divinity, doubtlessly did not consider them worthy to be witnesses of his resurrection; this last act of the terrible drama in which he had been the principal was enacted unseen by human eye. How deeply is this final resolution to be deplored!

Let us then imagine a loud noise being suddenly heard on the earth and in the heavens; voices resounding from the four corners of the horizon; the awful trumpets of the heavenly hosts pealing amidst the convulsion of the elements, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem pale with terror, hastening to the tomb of the great one crucified, impelled by a power divine towards the spot where the grandest and most solemn of miracles was about to be performed; then, suddenly, the tomb opening and the God arising shattering the funeral stone that had in vain opposed his upward flight in the sight of the assembled crowd prostrate in awe and admiration; then would all Israel, then would the whole Roman world have been converted on the spot, and the day predicted by the prophet would have been thenceforth accomplished.

Unfortunately, events did not occur with this conspicuousness and publicity. Jesus disappeared from the sepulchre, and not one among the evangelists is enabled to inform us how, at what moment, or amid what series of circumstances this mysterious withdrawal took place.

Matthew states (but he is the only evangelist that records the facts) that the senators, princes, and priests, on hearing that the body of Jesus had disappeared from the tomb, offered a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying "Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept. And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."* We need not here inquire whether the act of bribery here referred to is, or is not, clearly proved. Neither St. Mark, nor St. Luke, nor St. John mentions it, notwithstanding its important character. Whether true or false, it resulted therefrom that a belief became general among the Jews, that the disciples had, during the night, clandestinely removed the body of their master; and as this belief rested on the statement of the soldiers themselves, who had been placed to guard the tomb, and was not disproved by any supernatural and well-known event, no blame can fairly be cast on the Jews for having unanimously received it.

II.

No person, then, was present at the resurrection of Jesus. Only on the Sunday, Mary Magdalen "and the other Mary," having come to see the sepulchre, the earth trembled, the angel of the Lord descended from

* Pecuniam copiosam dederunt militibus dicentes : Dicite, quia discipuli ejus nocte venerunt et furati sunt eum, nobis dormientibus. . . . At illi acceptâ pecuniâ fecerunt sicut erant edocti. Et divulgatum est verbum istud apud Judaeos, usque in hodiernam diem. Matthew xxviii. 12 sq.

heaven, removed the stone which closed the tomb, and seating himself thereon addressed the women, saying, "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. *He is not here*, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and behold he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you."

Such is the narrative of Matthew; it is far from being identical with those of the other evangelists. In St. Mark, the two holy women, on their arrival, find the stone of the sepulchre removed, and on entering the tomb they perceive, not an angel, but a young man dressed in white, who addresses to them nearly the same words which Matthew puts into the mouth of the angel.* According to St. Luke, when the two Marys were appalled at not finding the body of Christ when they sought it, two men appeared before them and informed them that Jesus had risen.† St. John again, states that Mary Magdalen having found the stone removed from the sepulchre, went weeping to seek Simon Peter and another disciple, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." These disciples having verified her statement, returned to their homes; and it was only after these occurrences that Mary, having stooped, bathed in tears, to look into the tomb, perceived *two angels* seated on the spot where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the feet; and

* "And entering into the sepulchre they saw a *young man*." Mark xvi. 5.

† "And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them," etc. Luke xxiv. 4.

these angels did not give her the explanation of the circumstance, which is furnished by the other evangelists, but simply said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" and she said unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."*

It is useless to enumerate the discrepancies of these several narratives. It is very doubtful, *if* the people received such varying accounts whether they could accept them as positive testimony of their authenticity. We say *if* this narrative were known to the people, because St. Mark declares that the holy women, after beholding the apparitions of the sepulchre, went out quickly and fled, for they trembled and were amazed;† neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid."

And yet, if we are to believe two of the evangelists, Matthew and John, Jesus himself appeared to them in the sepulchre.‡

However, in the narrative of John, it is said that Mary, having herself turned back, saw Jesus standing, but knew not that it was he, *but supposing him to be the gardener*, said unto him, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."§ Finally, it was necessary for Jesus to open her eyes, that she might recognise in him the one she sought.

The blindness of the disciples was greater far, and

* "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white," etc. John xx. 11 and the following.

† Mark xvi. 8.

‡ John xx. 14; Matthew xxviii. 9.

§ John xx. 14 and 15. Et non sciebat quia Jesus esset. . . Illa existimans quia hortulanus esset, dicit ei : Domine, si tu sustulisti eum, dicito mihi ubi posuisti, et ego eum tollam.

the surprise which their hesitation excites can but be extreme, when the express terms are remembered in which Jesus had proclaimed the necessity of his death, and the certainty of his resurrection.

What had been related to them concerning the fact of the resurrection itself, had been received by the eleven disciples with nought save manifest incredulity. Mary Magdalen, having told them that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, *they believed her not*.* What she told them seemed to them mere idle tales, and they believed her not.† This inexplicable scepticism becomes more evident in the course of the Gospel narrative.

According to St. Matthew, Jesus when revealing himself to the holy women, said to them, "Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."‡

It may perhaps appear strange and unfortunate that he did not consider it advisable to reveal himself to the apostles in Jerusalem itself, and that he did not publicly appear in the midst of Judea, the victor over death itself; but let us not judge the secret designs of this man-god, whose whole life is so incomprehensible, and let us accompany his favourite disciples into Galilee.

"Then the eleven disciples, says Matthew, went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him." *But some doubted*,§ adds the Gospel. *They doubted!* Wherefore? The other evangelists furnish us with an explanation; it was because the appearance of Jesus after his resurrection, whether from some unknown cause, or whether from his having assumed a superhuman

* Mark xvi. 11.

† Luke xxiv. 11.

‡ Matthew xxviii. 10.

§ Matthew xxviii. 17.

transfiguration, was not identical with the appearance of Jesus in the life; and those who had been in the closest intercourse with him in his human existence, had difficulty in recognising him.

We have already seen that Mary Magdalen did not recognise Jesus at the first moment in the sepulchre. "He appeared *under another form*,"* said Mark to two of his disciples, as they walked and went into the country; and they went and told it to the other disciples; neither *believed they them*."†

The episode of Emmaus is not less extraordinary.

Two of his disciples went to a village called Emmaus, which was about sixty furlongs distant from Jerusalem. As they talked together of all these things that had happened, Jesus drew near, and went with them; but their eyes were holden, *that they should not know him*.‡

They walked side by side for a considerable time, meanwhile relating to Jesus the events which had recently happened in Jerusalem, his crucifixion and the report of his resurrection. And here we may remark a singular fact. In speaking of Jesus, they call him a *prophet*, § *mighty in word and deed before God and all the people*, § but they do not designate him by the name of God. Jesus, in his turn, talked with them, expounded unto them all the Scriptures, and was about to quit them; but they persuaded him to stop at the village to eat meat at their table, and it was only when he broke the holy bread with them, that their eyes were opened; but when they at last recognised him, he vanished from their astonished sight. || They returned to Jerusalem,

* Mark xvi. 12.

† Mark xvi. 13.

‡ Luke xxiv. 16.

§ Luke *ib.* 19.

|| Luke *ib.* 30 and 31.

related what they had seen to the eleven apostles, and as they spoke, Jesus stood in the midst of them and said unto them, "Peace be with you."

But they were terrified and affrighted, and *supposed they had seen a spirit*.^{*} It was necessary for Jesus, in order to remove their incredulity, to show them his hands and feet pierced with the nails of the cross, and that St. Thomas, who has become the symbol of religious scepticism, should thrust his fingers into the bleeding wounds.[†] As notwithstanding all this, they as yet did not believe, he asked for food,[‡] and really ate a piece of fish and some honeycomb, by which they were convinced that he was truly risen.

Jesus appeared once more on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, to Simon Peter, to Thomas, to Nathaniel, to the sons of Zebedee, and to two others who were occupied in fishing from a boat. It was at the dawn of day Jesus appeared on the bank, and again on this occasion *his disciples did not recognise him*.[§] This was the last appearance of Jesus in this world.

III.

This is all the information which the Gospel has preserved for us, concerning the resurrection of the crucified God, and the circumstances under which he appeared after his death. We here enter into no criticism of the Gospel; we do not discuss the greater or less probability of these wonderful recitals; we will not here investigate whether the two Marys and the favourite

^{*} Luke xxiv. 37.

[†] Luke *ib.* 38; John xx. 26 and 27.

[‡] Luke xxiv. 41. [§] John xxi. 4.

disciples were not, in the sepulchre and elsewhere, deluded by visions and hallucinations, of which we have such numerous examples ; still less will we enquire, whether the events which they record, and the general belief in which, they had so manifest an interest to establish, did really and truly occur. No ! We consider the Gospel as records of truth, and we ask every sincere and impartial mind, whether it was possible that Jews could conscientiously admit the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, whether they even had any positive knowledge of its occurrence.

According to the Gospel statement, the material fact of the resurrection was seen by no one, and could not therefore be publicly verified. At the expiration of two days, the tomb in which the body of Jesus had been deposited was found empty, the stone which closed up the entrance had been removed. By whom ? By what means ? Under what circumstances ? The Gospel gives us no reply. The holy women who came to weep at the tomb of Jesus, struck with dismay, instead of believing in the resurrection, accused the Jews of having removed the body of the Saviour, while the Jews, on their side, with quite as much credibility, accused the disciples of having during the night, clandestinely abstracted the mortal remains of their master. How is light to be thrown ? How is the truth to be ascertained in respect of these two contrary assumptions, which both found utterance so soon as the disappearance of the body became known ? What ! the disciples themselves, who had been warned of this event, refused to believe in it ; they doubted even when Jesus showed himself to them in Galilee. Jesus, arisen, appeared two or three times, and the apostles and Mary Magdalen took him for a stranger, and did

not recognise the features of him with whom they had so long lived in intimate communion; and the Jewish people, who had not been present at any of these miraculous apparitions, to whom it had not been granted, as it had been to St. Thomas, to touch the hands, the side, and the wounds of the crucified Redeemer, were to be more confiding, more credulous than these! Besides, how could this faith be disseminated among the masses?

Jesus did reveal himself after his death, to some privileged disciples; but he was never seen by any of the inhabitants of Jerusalem or Judæa; he did not even arise in avenging sublimity in the presence of his executioners, in order to convince them, and to fill their souls with dread and remorse. How then, could the Jews have believed in narratives, moreover, inconsistent with each other, and produced by those who pretended to have seen him in places very remote from the capital, and whose testimony was necessarily exposed to suspicion, in consequence of their interest being involved in the dissemination of this belief?

Thus, the evidence of the resurrection, the signs which were to prove Christ's divinity with a refulgence greater than the light of day, were not vouchsafed to the Jewish people. Let us place ourselves for a moment in the position of the cotemporaries of these events, and let us ask ourselves, with all the integrity of our consciences, if those occurrences were of a nature to inspire unhesitating belief, and if we can blame the incredulity by which the Jews were then actuated.

TENTH BOOK.

The morality of the Gospel.—The Jews always held the moral precepts taught by Jesus.—They opposed the assertion of his divinity only.—The morality of the Gospel is identical with that of the Bible.—Important innovation for the Pagan world, but not for the Jewish people.—Parables.—Man lives not by bread alone.—The righteous shall live by faith.—The Sellers driven from the Temple.—Suffer little children to come unto me.—The lost sheep.—Respect of Jesus for the ancient law.—Morality of the Pentateuch cited by him as a condition of eternal salvation.—The Prophets and Jewish ceremonial.—Simplification of the law.—Hypocritical Pharisees.

I.

WE have impartially recorded, on the textual authority of the Gospel alone, the various incidents in the life and death of Jesus, and we have asked ourselves if the Jewish contemporaries could possibly therein have found sufficient proof of his divinity. We think, on the contrary, everything indicates that they could not have known they were condemning a god, and causing him to perish who had come on earth in order to save them. But our investigation would not be conclusive, if we did not consider a last objection, many times raised by the adversaries of Judaism.

How is this? say they. In the absence of other material proofs, ought not the admirable morality preached by Jesus, in itself have sufficiently revealed to the Jews the prophet and the God? This profound love of humanity, these beautiful principles of piety and virtue, the

spirit of superhuman kindness breathed from every page of the Gospels,—do not these furnish testimony as decisive as the miracles, of the divine character and authority of him from whom they emanated? Thus, in systematically rejecting the Gospel, in voluntarily shutting their eyes to the resplendent light of Christian morality, the Jews committed a true and undeniable crime; in this was involved, if it may be permitted so to say, a moral DEICIDE, and this fault causes a heavy historical responsibility also to weigh upon them.

This is the objection; it cannot be passed over in silence. It is, moreover, of importance that the argument so often employed in opposition to Judaism—viz., that the morality of the New, is superior to that of the Old Testament, should be once for all thoroughly investigated.

II.

HERE some preliminary observations are necessary. The moral principles of the doctrines of Jesus were, in fact, never rejected by his contemporaries. We have seen that on every occasion when he spoke in public, there gathered around him an attentive, respectful, and sympathetic assemblage. According to the narratives of the Evangelists, the utterances of the new Rabbi everywhere excited admiration, even enthusiasm. In him was greeted a new prophet; he was applauded as reviving the grand traditions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and all the illustrious seers of Israel. The people hastened to meet him at the entrance of the town, bearing palm branches and uttering cries of joy. When he arrived at Jerusalem, the entire city kept holiday, and all flocked to see “the new prophet of Nazareth.”

It is impossible too strenuously to insist upon this truth, to which the whole Gospel narrative testifies. The Jews did not hesitate a moment to form a favourable opinion of the Son of Mary; they constantly listened to his discourses, to his teachings and his denunciations of the vices of the people and their chiefs, with equal deference and submission. The authorities themselves, the Scribes and the Pharisees, who were so violently attacked and so passionately denounced by the young doctor as deserving the hatred and contempt of the nation, gave proof, in their treatment of Jesus, of the spirit of toleration and indulgence by which they were animated. Whether induced by the fear of offending public opinion, or by personal kindness, they permitted him to explain his doctrines and to follow up his predications in liberty, as they did all those who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Thus, the moral precepts which formed the groundwork of the new doctrine could be publicly taught, without reserve or opposition. They were accepted by the entire population, and no one attempted to question or refute them. No circumstance is recorded in the Gospel indicating that the authorities enforced silence on Jesus, or that those who were present closed their eyes to the moral truths that Jesus expounded with so much authority.

The resistance of the Jews commenced only at the moment when, by absolving from sin, he pretended to possess a power which, according to the belief of the Hebrew people, could pertain to God alone. The nature of that resistance was neither serious nor violent, until the time when, wresting from its primitive sense, the expression "Son of God," and imputing to it a material

significance, Jesus positively declared that he was miraculously born of the Eternal, and that the Father and he were a *unity* in two persons. From that day, but from that day only, the adorers of the One, Only, and Invisible God, withdrew all allegiance from him who thus disturbed and overthrew the fundamental dogma on the nature and attributes of God, made known unto them by the revelation at Sinai.

Thus, this disagreement which arose between Jesus and the Jews, related to the material question of the divinity alone; but to his doctrine, his morality, his sermons, they were ever ready to be submissive and obedient, inclined to follow his counsels, to repent of their faults, and, influenced by his inspired word, to do penance for them, as in the time of Isaiah and the other prophets. Of their favourable sentiments, a striking proof was given when John the Baptist summoned them to the borders of Jordan, to the baptism of repentance. The crowd hurried from all parts around the prophet of the desert. Now, the doctrine of the latter, if we judge it by St. Luke's statement of its leading maxims,* is certainly in no way inferior to that of the Gospels, although John the Baptist never pretended to be the Messiah, and still less to assume the name of God.

Thus it is evident that the Jews never rejected the moral teachings of Jesus. On the contrary, they received them with such enthusiasm that when the magistrates began, not without reason, to apprehend that fatal consequences might be produced by his passionate utterances, they durst not arrest Jesus, for fear of exciting the mass to rebellion, because they considered a prophet's person inviolable.†

* Luke iii. 3 and following.

† Matthew xxi. 46.

If the Nazarene reformer had confined his mission to that of a prophet, he would have continued to be welcomed by the whole Jewish nation, and to him would have been accorded, in the eyes of contemporaries and posterity, a permanent and splendid place among the seers and the celebrated doctors of the synagogue.

III.

THE morality which he preached was not, in truth, new to the Jewish people, it was that morality which, immediately after the Exodus from Egypt, they had heard solemnly proclaimed amidst the thunder of Sinai ; it was that morality which, during many consecutive centuries, had been taught by the ethical writers of Judea, David, Solomon, the great and the lesser prophets, Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus, Hillel and Schammaï, and all the elders of the Synagogue ; it was that code to which, whenever the force of the religious and moral sentiment seemed to decline, the voices of their inspired teachers never failed to recall the children of Israel.

For Pagan nations, the Gospel involved an infinite moral advance, and a real divine revelation. The day on which the world, which had been so long enveloped in material darkness, and in the excesses of depraved sensuality, first heard the gentle and pure voice of the Christian Apostles ; the day when words of charity, of universal love, of sacrifice and of fraternity, were first spoken to its wondering heart, it was moved, enchanted, raised above its primitive nature, transported into regions of unknown and unexpected serenity ; it hailed with delight that glorious and holy light which, first kindled by the fires of Horeb and by the torch of the Decalogue,

had become more radiant when clothed with the spiritualism of the prophets and the Evangelists.

It appeared to all these nations of idolaters, seated in the "shadow of death," as though a new and mysterious creation was going on in the universe, and as if their souls had been just quickened into life. In the Pagan world, it was a mighty and vast transformation. The Gospel brought liberty to the slave; to the paria of ancient times, equality and acceptance; to the great ones of the earth, the sentiment of moderation and of duty; to all, love and brotherhood; to all, the hope of another life of justice and recompense. The Gospel caused the worship of the spiritual, and of the noblest aspirations, to supersede that of gross and material desires; the plurality of the ancient gods was replaced by the philosophical and true idea of One Only God, Eternal, Infinite, Immutable, the Creator of heaven and earth. And though this God had once become incarnate in a human form, yet it was not for the purpose of carrying off insignificant mortals, and of polluting the sanctity of the domestic hearth, as did the Jupiter of mythology; it was not to take part, as did the other Olympian divinities, in the bloody conflicts of mortals, which spread carnage and mourning around; it was, on the contrary, to redeem and save sinful humanity by a sublime sacrifice. "There are no more poor or rich, no more great or small, there is neither bond nor free, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." *

All these principles were wholly new to the Pagan world; they wrought a radical revolution in its very midst, by opening to it an endless treasure of unknown emotions and ideas, which were thus regarded by it as a

* Paul's Epistles to the Galatians.

superhuman revelation. We must not be surprised that in the eyes of the Roman world the Gospel morality presented a dazzling proof of the divinity of Christianity and of its founder. Truly this doctrine was divine, for it was derived wholly and entirely from the Decalogue and from the prophets of Israel. The Gospels confirm and glorify all the precepts of reason and wisdom which go to form a really righteous man, and which constitute the strength and the grandeur of human society. With good reason ancient heathenism saw and saluted therein, what appeared to them to be well nigh the vision of God himself, the revelation of His divinity in the history of the human race.

But could it have assumed the same character in the eyes of the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus? No, doubtless it could not; for the teachings of the reformer of Nazareth contain nothing which all Israel had not long before learnt by the voices of their legislators, prophets and sages, not one of whom had ever dreamt of proclaiming himself on the ground of these his utterances, either Messiah, or God.

For the Roman world thus suddenly initiated by the Apostles and disciples of Jesus, into these resplendent truths, there was, and there must necessarily be, "Christian morality," "Christian charity," "Christian virtue." But for the Jews, who had for ages held and practised these precepts of right, there neither was, nor ever can be anything save "Israelite morality," "Israelite charity," "Israelite virtue," to be providentially disseminated among the people, and taught to the Gentiles by the bold propagators of the name and of the doctrine of Jesus.

The truth of these statements will be made manifest

by a few comparisons of the two texts ; they will prove that what is most admired in the moral precepts of the Gospel belongs exclusively to, and may be proudly claimed by, Judaism.

IV.

It is not our purpose to apply ourselves too closely to this branch of enquiry. We could quote, we may truly say, verse by verse and line by line, as evidence of the numerous instances in which the master of the Gospel borrowed from the Old Testament, and from the teachings of those very Pharisean doctors, who were, notwithstanding, the objects of his bitter resentment. The majority of the most admired parables were popular in the Jewish academies. Those which abound in the Talmud are in no way inferior in respect of purity, or moral elevation of thought, or picturesqueness of form, to the relations by which Jesus captivated the attention of his disciples, and by which, under the lively garb of moral fables, he instilled important truths into their minds.

A practice universally adopted by the heads of the schools and the learned in Israel, was to render instruction attractive under the form of legendary recitals. Jesus initiated them and very often confined himself in his discourses to the reproduction of old sayings which he re-modelled.

A minute statement of all in the Gospel that is borrowed from the sacred writings and from the doctors who preceded Jesus, does not, however, form a part of the plan of this work. We must restrict ourselves to the consideration of the fundamental principles which chiefly characterised his morality, and invested it with

the grandeur and authority of a divine revelation in the eyes of the Pagan nations.

Let us first restore some important passages to the ancient law, which have been current in the world during the last 1,800 years, disseminated by the Gospel, and thus generally attributed, by public opinion, to Christianity, although the Evangelists themselves assuredly had no intention of depriving the Old Testament of the glory of their enunciation.

That essential spiritual maxim, the honor of which was imputed by the Roman world to Christianity—"Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,"*—was revealed and proclaimed not by Jesus, not by the Gospel, it is of far greater antiquity and of equally glorious origin; the great Hebrew legislator, Moses, at the very moment when he was to be separated for ever from his beloved people, pronounced it textually, and addressed to them the admirable farewell oration called Deuteronomy.†

That sublime declaration, "But the just shall live in his faith," set forth by St. John‡, under this form, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," and which became the essential basis of the doctrine of St. Paul§, the true founder of Christianity, the subtle Apostle of the Gentiles; that axiom by which the human soul rises to such lofty morality belongs neither to the Gos-

* Matthew v. 4; Luke iv. 4.

† Deuteronomy viii. 3. "That he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread. **כִּי לֹא עַל הַלֶּחֶם לִבְדּוֹ יֵחִי־הָאָדָם** **כִּי עַל כָּל מוֹצֵא פִי יְהוָה יֵחִי־הָאָדָם**

‡ St. John iii. 36.

§ Paul, Epistle to the Galatians, iii. 11; Epistle to the Romans, i. 17; Epistle to the Hebrews, x. 38.

pel nor to its disseminators. The prophet Habakkuk* is its primitive author in the brief and magnificent prophecy which the canon has preserved.

The strange, yet singularly pious episode of the sellers cast out of the Temple, or the words said to have been uttered by Jesus on that occasion, if accepted in their symbolical signification, are not more truly of Gospel origin.† How greatly the world has, during the last 1,800 years, used and abused this violent protest against the dealers in doves and other articles destined for sacrifice at the door of the Temple is well known. They especially misapplied it to the Jews themselves, and the words, "The vendors must be chased from the Temple," were used as a proverb in order to justify the violence and persecutions of which the Israelites were victims. There are few who know, or condescend to remember that the angry words used by the son of Mary on this occasion, are quoted from the prophet Jeremiah, who uttered them reproachfully to the sinners of his time, as did Jesus later, in the Temple of Jerusalem, "This house which is called by my name, is become a den of robbers in your eyes."‡

"Suffer little children to come unto me,"§ says Jesus, "and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God; and it is out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."|| These last words, characterising the spirit and the import of the beautiful maxim,

* Habakkuk, ii. 4. "The just shall live by his faith." צדיק באמונתו יחיה

† Matthew xxi. 12, 13.

‡ Jeremiah vii. 11. המערת פרצים היה הבית הזה אשר נקרא שמי עליו

§ Mark x. 14.

|| Matthew xxi. 16.

“Suffer little children to come unto me.” *Sinite parvulos venire ad me*—are extracted from the book of Psalms, where David applies them to the glorification of the Eternal.*

The Gospel contains a remarkable parable; that of the good shepherd who, seeing that one of his sheep had gone astray, leaves the rest of the flock for a time and goes to seek it, and when he finds it, he rejoiceth more at that sheep, than at the ninety-nine that went not astray; for there is more joy in heaven for one sinner who repenteth, than for ten just ones who have never gone astray.† We take leave to say, without offence to the authors of the Gospels, that this consoling doctrine had long been disseminated in the Pharisean schools of Judea, and that the Talmud cites it in terms almost identical, as having been taught by two illustrious doctors among the Pharisees.‡

The quotations made from the biblical texts and from the works of the Synagogue sages, and the analogy observable between them and the New Testament ought in no way to surprise us, when we remember that not a single passage is anywhere to be found in the Gospels, whence we can infer that Jesus purposed introducing a new law into Israel.

Following the example of the Jewish doctors, he invariably quoted some verse of the sacred writings in support of the authority of his words, and even of his mission.

To him, doubtless, belong the commentaries which he

* Psalms iii. 2.

† Matthew xviii. 12, &c.

‡ מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים שם צדיקים נמורים אינם
עומדים שם. Talmud, Traite Berachot, 34 b, et Sanhedrim, 99 a.

deduced from these texts, but he always took great pains to connect them with the ancient law ; he quoted it, he incessantly enforced its observance. He endeavoured, as did the prophets of Israel, to recall all wanderers from the right path to the commandments of God. He went after the sheep that had gone astray, in order to restore them to the fold ; but he at the same time solemnly declared that he desired no change in the essential principles of Judaism. "Think not," he exclaims, "that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil, for verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law until all be fulfilled."*

Therefore, when Jesus spoke thus to the people, he affirmed and proclaimed anew the truth, the grandeur, and the authority of all the moral principles contained in the Old Testament. He spoke to the Hebrews a language which they had always heard, and to which for ages their hearts and minds had been accustomed. The prophet of Nazareth, in addressing the Jewish people, confined himself to severe denunciations of the vices of high and low, to unmitigated censure of the Scribes and Pharisees ; but the moral law of Sinai was never questioned. Jesus extolled and ever more zealously enforced all the virtues already revealed to Israel by Moses, David and Solomon, and by the glorious constellation of Hebrew seers.

It is necessary to recall two significant circumstances by which this principle is manifested, for they prove how wholly identical were the teachings of Jesus with those of the Pentateuch.

* Matthew v. 17, etc.

One day, says the Gospel,* a young man came and said unto him, "Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus replied to him, "Why callest thou me good, there is none good but One, that is God : but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." He saith unto him, "Which?" Jesus said, "Thou shalt do no murder : thou shalt not commit adultery ; thou shalt not steal ; thou shalt not bear false witness ; honor thy father and thy mother ; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

No Jewish doctor would have spoken differently. What Jesus declared to be the condition of eternal life is simply the Decalogue, in the very words of the text, to which he added the beautiful precept in Leviticus, "Love thy neighbour as thyself."†

On another occasion,‡ a lawyer among the Pharisees came and asked him this question, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.§ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Thus, this was again a mere quotation from the sacred writings, an extract from the Pentateuch, containing in a few significant words, the epitome of the whole moral

* Matthew xix. 16 and following ; Mark x. 17, etc. ; Luke xviii. 18, etc.

† ואהבת לרעך כמוך Leviticus xix. 18.

‡ Matthew xxii. 35, and the following.

§ Deuteronomy vi. 5.

system of Mosaism. It was in fact a declaration that there was nothing higher than this admirable law which comprises in one and the same commandment, the love of God and the love of one's neighbour.

Thus no doubt exists as to the intentions of Jesus in respect of the teaching of moral truth. He sought to bring back those who had departed from them, to those great principles of the Jewish law, which he never dreamt of modifying. What, indeed, could he have addressed to the Hebrews more beautiful, more simple, and more evidently true, than the maxims we have just perused ?

V.

JESUS while enjoining on his contemporaries the sacred precepts which had formed for centuries past the basis of Judaism, and while summing up the moral code of Israel in a few salient principles, was also steadily pursuing an object which placed him among the great Hebrew reformers.

The tendency of the Jewish Synagogue, like that of religious forms having a long historical existence, was to increase its ceremonial and its symbolism, and to multiply the outward observances, at the cost of the real spirit of religion. This tendency, which was virtually a formal worship, had shown itself at several periods ; and against this, the great prophets and the celebrated doctors of Israel had most energetically protested.

Thus Jesus fulfilled a lofty mission and promoted religious morality by combating in his turn these abuses, and by teaching that the means of salvation did not consist in the outward practice of religion alone, but in

the love of God and one's fellow man ; but as in regard of literal precept, he was only the echo of Moses, so he was in respect of the spirit of that doctrine, only the follower of the prophets and sages of Judea.

Who is not familiar with the admirable rebuke of Isaiah ? “ To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith the Lord : I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts : and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts ? Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me ; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with ; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth : they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you : yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”* Jesus denounces the hypocrites who, when they fast, do so with ostentation, and disfigure their faces in public ;† but how far is the Gospel, in this matter also, from reaching the sublimity of Isaiah’s invocation !‡ “ Wherefore have ye fasted,” exclaims the prophet, “ and thou seest not ? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge ? Behold, in the day of

* Isaiah i. 11, *et seq.*

† Matthew vi. 16.

‡ Isaiah lviii. 3, and the following.

your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness ; ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen ? A day for a man to afflict his soul ? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him ? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord ? Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke ?” By no writer have morality and worship ever been invested with a loftier spirituality, than they were by the Jewish prophets ; the Gospel may have followed in their footsteps with brilliant success, but nowhere does it rise above them.

This superiority of virtue over observances, of the idea over the form, was expressed by the sages of the Great Synagogue, long before the appearance of Jesus, in the following passage preserved for us by the Talmud. “The 613 precepts of Moses* were reduced by David to eleven.”† To walk uprightly ; to speak the truth in one’s heart, not to backbite with the tongue, not to injure one’s neighbour, not to take up a reproach against one’s neighbour, to despise what is despicable, to honour those who fear the Lord ; not to lend on usury, (and here the Talmud adds, ‘not even unto a stranger,’ נכרי) and to take no bribe against the innocent.”

Isaiah subsequently reduces them to six. “To keep

* In enumerating all the negative and affirmative precepts which are found in the Pentateuch, this number of 613 was reached, and formed what the Hebrew sages term the 613 precepts of Moses.

† These principles of David are taken from the 15th Psalm.

judgment, to walk in the path of virtue, to keep one's hand from doing any evil, to close one's ears to acts of violence, and to shut one's eyes in order not to behold vice.* Micah reduces them to three; "to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God."† Isaiah again reduces them to two; "to do justice, and to love mercy."‡ Finally Habakkuk sums them up in these words: "The just shall live by his faith."§

We perceive how greatly the simplification and the spiritualisation of the moral Code became active in the ancient Synagogue, and in the thoughts of those Pharisee sages of whom the Gospel has given us so incorrect a description. In a circumstance resembling that in which Jesus had expressed in synthetical terms, the fundamental characteristics of Jewish law and morality, the illustrious Hillel, one of the grandest personages among the doctors of the second temple, made a similar reply to a heathen who enquired in what the law of Israel consisted. "Do not unto others that which thou wouldest not that they should do unto thee. This is the essence of the law, the rest is only commentary."||

And as we are thus again led to speak of the opinions of these Pharisean doctors who were so ill used by Jesus, let us here declare once for all, who were those, against whom were directed these violent rebukes, which found acceptance, not only with the people, but with the Pharisees themselves. The great reformer of Nazareth spoke not to the revered doctors and true sages of phariseism, to disciples of Shammai, or Hillel, to the illus-

* Isaiah lv.

† Micah vi. 8.

‡ Isaiah lvi. i.

§ Habakkuk ii. 4. All the texts we have quoted above are to be found in the Talmud, Treatise Maccoth, fol. xxiv. recto.

|| Talmud, Treatise Shabboth, ch. ii.

trious fathers of the Synagogue ; he spoke to the hypocrites, who, according to his words, "bound heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders ; but they themselves would not move them with one of their fingers But all their works they do for to be seen of men ; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, who pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment mercy and faith. For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."*

The contempt expressed by the rabbins of Israel, for the Pharisean hypocrites was not less profound than that felt by Jesus, when he uttered his vehement, true, and withering denunciations. Let us examine the Code of Phariseeism, the doctrine of the Talmud sages on this subject :

"There are seven classes of Pharisees," they say in their figurative language ; "(1) *the broad-shouldered* ; they inscribe their actions on their back, in order that they may be honored by men ; (2) *Stumblers* ; who traverse the streets, dragging their feet after them, and stumbling over the stones in order to attract attention ; (3) *the head strikers* ; those shut their eyes, in order, as they pretend, not to see women, and strike their heads against a wall ; (4) *the lowly strengthened* ; who walk bent double ; (5) *the calculating Pharisees* ; those who observe the law for the sole object of receiving the rewards therein promised ; (6) *those moved by fear* ; who do good from the fear of punishment only ; (7) *those influenced by a sense of duty*. The last-mentioned are the pious."

* Matthew xxiii. *passim*.

Rabbi Nachaman says on this subject, "The supreme tribunal will duly punish hypocrites who wrap their taleth around them to appear, while they are not, true Pharisees."

"Fear not true Pharisees," said their arch-persecutor Alexander Jannée, when dying, to his wife, "neither fear those who are not (his friends the Sadducees); but on the contrary fear greatly painted Pharisees (those who are not, but who wish to appear Pharisees)."* †

At all periods and in all religions there have been "painted Pharisees," according to the expression of Alexander Jannée, they exist even in our day. Tartuffes and hypocrites who conceal their passions and vices under the sacred cloak of religion, were not and are not found in Judea alone. But the true Pharisees, the great moralists to whom we are indebted for this fine treatise "Maxims of the Fathers,‡" did not wait till Jesus appeared to cast severe censure on the false devotees of their epoch. On this subject again, the Master of the Gospel had but to recall their powerful expressions and to translate them into his own individual words.

* This important passage is taken from the Talmud, Treatise Sota, xxii. verso. The expression "painted Pharisees" has some analogy with the "whited sepulchres" spoken of by Jesus.

† See Babylonian Talmud, Treatise Sota, Folio 22 A. Also Buxtorf Lexicon Talmudicum. (Translator.)

‡ A treatise on morals, preserved in the Talmud, and consisting of aphorisms uttered by the sages of the Great Synagogue (אנשי כנסת הגדולה) The illustrious doctors who taught during the existence of the Second Temple, are thus designated, and their precepts are second to those of no other moralist; they are, above all, remarkable for their eminently social and practical character.

ELEVENTH BOOK.

Sermon on the Mount.—Analogy between its teachings and those of the Holy Scriptures.—Form adopted by the final editors of this Sermon.—Aim they had in view.—Similarity between the Sermon on the Mount and various passages of the Bible and of the Hebrew sages.—Anger.—Evil desire.—Retaliation.—Hatred of an enemy.—Alms.—Prayer.—Treasures of Heaven.—Trust in God.—Not to judge others.—Summary.

I.

THE moral doctrine of Jesus is comprehensively set forth in the celebrated sermon which he pronounced in Galilee, when seated amid his disciples, on the summit of a hill, around which the people had gathered intent on hearing the words of the young rabbi. This beautiful sermon, which has reached us under the traditional name of "The Sermon on the Mount," virtually consists of a few simple and clear aphorisms calculated to show the literal sense of the text perspicaciously to explain the true spirit of Israelitish law and morality, as they had ever been taught by the spiritual teachers of the chosen people. Of this, an analysis of the words of Jesus, and a few close verbal comparisons will furnish ample proof.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," exclaimed the doctor of Nazareth, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merci-

ful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

And he added, "Ye have heard it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment. Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you that whosoever looketh at a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart. Again, ye have heard that it has been said of them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but I say unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne ; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool ; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Ye have heard it has been said, An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth ; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn the other also. Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thy alms may be in secret. When thou prayest, pray in silence ; but when ye pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathens do. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, and what you shall drink. Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth

them. Take no heed therefore of the morrow, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* Judge not, that ye be not judged. Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.”†

Such are the fundamental and textual principles of this authoritative discourse, which rightfully became the type of Gospel morality. Judaism has the right to affirm that these great principles of fraternity, charity and faith are its inalienable possession, and that after and in spite of all the iniquities of which it had been the victim, it may well be deemed a glory for this faith that, by the intervention of Jesus and his disciples, it bestowed on the world all the purest and sublimest elements of the moral code of Sinai. But when these glorious teachings were presented to it on the mount, where apostles and people eagerly listened to the words of the new master, that world must have received them without astonishment, and have seen in them nought save the uninterrupted traditional ethics of the sages of Israel. The sentiments of surprise and admiration with which the teachings of the son of Mary were received were excited more by the man than by the doctrine ‡ “Whence has this man so much wisdom?” exclaimed the crowd. “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” And in truth, what

* The famous passage “First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye,” is in the sermon on the mount, the corollary and the development of this precept. Matthew vii. 5.

† The entire sermon on the mount fills the chapters v., vi., and vii. of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

‡ Matthew xiii. 54, 55.

novelty, what fresh revelation could there be in the eyes of the Jews, in the precepts we have just quoted ?

II.

The first point worthy of remark is the scrupulous care with which Jesus in this sermon connects his teaching with that of the whole of Judaism. At the very opening of this discourse, we read this solemn declaration, "Think not that I have come to destroy this law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." *

The son of Mary was a Jew, had been taught all the precepts of the Hebrew faith, and his genius or his inspiration had led him especially to select all that is most beautiful in holy writ; but he at the same time proclaimed, as he himself so forcibly declared, the eternity and immutability of the commandments contained in the law, and his habitual expression when setting forth any great moral principle was this, "That is the law and the prophets." †

However, the final editors of this beautiful sermon on the mount were not so scrupulous as was their master, in continually asserting the analogy between his teachings and the doctrine of the sacred writers. It is probable that at the time when the Gospels were colated, the Apostles had previously abandoned that Judea which had shown itself so hostile to their attempts at proselytism, in order to undertake the conversion of the Gentiles.‡ Having thus wholly severed themselves from

* Matthew v. 17.

† Ibid. vii. 12.

‡ The Gospels were written in Greek, a fact which clearly proves that they were composed wholly for Pagan people, and not

Judaism, they had no longer any motive to induce a belief that the principles of the doctrine which they sought to diffuse had been borrowed from the Jewish sacred books ; on the contrary, they must have striven to cause the Gospel to be regarded as a radical innovation, as a total subversion of the order of ideas pertaining to the Old Testament. The singular, and it may be said somewhat disingenuous form given to the sermon on the mount, must be in fact attributed to the presence of this intention.

Those who read it without having previously acquired an intimate knowledge of the Old Testament, deduce from it the conviction that the Jews practice but a negative morality ; that they were even instructed to encourage sentiments of hatred towards all other men, and that Jesus alone introduced into the world principles of toleration, fraternity, mercy, charity, and affirmative virtue. "Ye have heard that it has been said by them of old," exclaimed the reformer of Nazareth at the commencement of every important sentence, "but I, I say unto you." A belief is thus generated that all is new in the evangelical doctrines, and that the Gospel thus invoked is an entire and striking rupture between the old and the new law. And what is more, the editors of the Gospel, not satisfied with possessing themselves with the uncounted moral treasures of the Synagogue, without indicating the ancient source whence they were drawn, sought also to vilify the ancient law, by imputing to it maxims opposed to the simplest notions of charity and virtue. Thus in the Sermon on the Mount we find this flagrant accusation : "You have heard that it was said, for Jews, since Hebrew was at that time still the national language of the Israelites,

Love your neighbour, and hate your enemy, but I say unto you, etc.," an accusation which may be justly designated as a wholesale and indefensible calumny, as we shall soon have occasion to show, by means of some incontrovertible texts. These brief observations suffice to indicate the spirit by which the editors of the Gospel were animated; they wished to appear as religious innovators in the eyes of the Pagan peoples. They desired in some degree to evince to the Gentiles, the necessity of a second divine revelation, destined to give a new sense and a new direction to the ancient law. The moment is at length come when the truth on this subject must be declared, a truth long obscured by hostile passion, and when its true parentage and its true name must be restored to Christian morality, as it was enunciated by the son of Mary, by the name of Morality of Israel.

III.

"BLESSED are the poor in spirit," exclaimed Jesus upon the mountain. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the peacemakers," etc.

"The Lord preserveth the simple," the royal Psalmist had said before him.* "Honour shall uphold the humble in spirit;" thus said the sublime author of the Book of Proverbs.†

"The meek shall inherit the earth," King David adds.‡
 "The Lord giveth grace unto the lowly," Solomon re-

* שֹׁמֵר פִּתְאִים הִי Psalm cxvi. 6.

† Proverbs xxix. 23.

‡ Psalm xxxvii. 11.

peats.* “He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness and honour.” †

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,” ‡ exclaims the sweet singer of Israel. “Love peace and pursue it at any cost,” said Hillel to his disciples,§ thus reproducing the maxim of the Psalmist, “Seek peace and pursue it.” ||

And the master of the Gospel continues in these words, “Blessed be those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”

“Remember that it is better to be persecuted than to persecute,” ¶ preached the doctors of the Synagogue in their turn, with expressive brevity.

Jesus continued, saying to his disciples, “You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.”

Solomon said, “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.”** “Banish from thy heart anger and strife.” ††

In the admirable book of Ecclesiasticus, written by Jesus the son of Sirach, occur these words, “Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord? He sheweth no mercy to a man, which is like himself, and doth he ask forgiveness of his own sins? Remember the commandments, and

* Proverbs iii. 34.

† Ibid. xxi. 21.

‡ Psalm cxxxiii. 1.

§ Pirke-Aboth i. 12.

|| Psalm xxxiv. 14.

¶ הנעלבים ואינן עולבים Derech Eretz Rab. ii.

** Ecclesiastes vii. 9.

†† Ibid.

bear no malice to thy neighbour.”* Finally, the Pharisees, so bitterly denounced by Jesus, said, “Be not prone to anger.”† “When a man indulges in anger, if he is a sage he loses his reason, if a prophet the spirit of prophecy departeth from him.”‡ “The friend of God is he who yieldeth not to anger, who presents an example of humility.”§

The sermon on the mount thus continues, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you that whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his own heart.”

O immortal Decalogue! even before Jesus spoke, didst thou not proclaim this sublime exhortation, “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife*, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, nor his man-servant, not his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour’s”?|| The expression itself employed by the master of the Gospels was one of frequent recurrence in the teachings of the sages of Judæa. “He,” say they, “who looks upon a woman with impure intention, has, it may be said in so doing, committed adultery.”¶

* Ecclesiasticus xxviii. 3, etc.

† This expression is almost the literal reproduction of what Jesus said at the conclusion of the passage above quoted. After the exhortation not to yield to anger, the Gospel adds, “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew v.

‡ Perké-Aboth ii. 10.

§ Talmud, Treatise Pesachim, 67, col. 2.

|| לא תחמד אשת רעך Exodus xx.; Deuteronomy v. 21.

¶ כל המכתבל באשה בכוונה כאילה בא אל חיה Talmud Massechet Kalah.

And when Jesus, developing this moral precept, proclaims the sanctity and indissolubility of the marriage tie, except in cases of adultery,* what does he affirm other than did Eliezar, when he declared that the altar sheds tears on the conduct of the man who repudiates his wife.† Jesus connects the sanctity of marriage almost immediately with the sanctity of an oath “Again, ye have heard, that it has been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne, nor by earth, for it is His footstool, nor by Jerusalem, nor by thy head.”

“Accustom not thy mouth to swearing,” said Jesus the son of Sirach, “neither use thyself to the naming of the Holy One. Let not the name of God be continually in thy mouth. A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with iniquity, and the plague shall never depart from his house.”‡ And long before the son of Sirach wrote, these words were to be read in the Decalogue, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”§

And here at this point, occurs a passage in the authoritative sermon of Jesus which has always been considered as involving a maxim of the highest morality and human self-abnegation. “Render not eye for eye, tooth for tooth, blow for blow, as it was said unto you by those of old,” cries the prophet of Nazareth; “but resist not evil; *whoever shall smite thee on the left cheek, turn to him the right one also.*”

* Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v. 31, 32.

† Talmud, Treatise Sanhedrim, 22a.

‡ Ecclesiasticus xxiii. 9, and the following.

§ Exodus xx.; Deuteronomy v.

There is much to be said as to the true signification of this law of retaliation, which has served as matter of such grave reproach against Mosaism, but which is in fact the simple application, under a particular form, of the great social principle that the punishment should be proportionate to the crime.* But this investigation is

* An Israelite rabbin thus expresses himself, in his interesting studies on the Pentateuch, as to blows and wounds :—

“ Hebrew legislation enacted that the compensation was to be by damages equal to the injuries inflicted. Tooth for tooth, eye for eye, hand for hand, say the Scriptures. This does not mean that a tooth was to be extracted, an eye put out, or the hand cut off of the person who had been guilty of such crimes ; the law of retaliation would have been, in such a case, nothing but a monstrous iniquity, had any certainty been possible of inflicting on the one, exactly the same injury as had been received by the other. And if the criminal had previously accidentally lost one eye or one hand, is it to be supposed that his only hand was to be cut off, or his only eye put out ? Such a course, from the excess and inequality of the punishment, would have manifestly been a violation of this law of retaliation itself. Besides, what advantage could possibly accrue to the one who had been mutilated from the mutilation inflicted on his adversary ? Combined with the pain he had suffered, he would have had but the regret of having taken a useless revenge, he would have left the court of justice with his wound, without the slightest solace to cancel its remembrance. The law of retaliation thus understood would have been simply a savage absurdity. Several contributors to the Talmud (which work has supplied us with the preceding reflections), who were contemporaries of the administration of the Mosaic law, inform us besides, that the law of retaliation was never thus interpreted or executed.

“ The law involved a complete system of compensation. Tooth for tooth and eye for eye signify merely a restoration to him to whom they are owing of his tooth or his eye, or as nearly as possible, of what is an equivalent to them. Every man has a fixed value, this value is diminished by mutilation ; let him who has inflicted the injury restore the value to him who has received it, and

not here necessary; it suffices for us to ascertain whether this exhortation by Jesus, which has been set forth as

let him give in money the cost of his cure and of his enforced action. After this method, the law really enforced a compensation for the injury occasioned.

“This system of compensation was applied in the most varied circumstances. If an apprentice was wounded by his master, his liberty was immediately restored to him. If a pregnant woman received a violent blow, the husband summoned the guilty before a court of justice, by which he was sentenced to pay a fine. The law is explicit on this point. If an animal inflicted a wound, its owner was responsible for the consequences; and if he had been warned several times and the said animal caused a person's death, he might, in expiation of his carelessness, have to forfeit his life. If any one opened a well without covering it and caused any accident, if any depredation was committed on property, the law of retaliation enacted compensation. If an ox was stolen from its owner, the thief was condemned to return five oxen. Again, this was the law of retaliation; the Hebrews were agriculturists; to steal an ox was to inflict a great loss on the labourer, because, in addition to the loss of the ox was that of his labour, and full restitution was enforced. Only four sheep are returned for one stolen, as that animal is of less value to the agriculturist. He who stole anything that had been lent to him, returned only twice as much to the owner. Again retaliation; a thing or an animal which was lent is always less useful than one retained, thus compensation in this instance is trifling.

“A final application of the celebrated law may here be adduced. It is, that by the important duty which the seducer is compelled to fulfil, that of becoming the husband of the young girl whom he has deceived, he restores to her her honour by a marriage which is henceforth to be indissoluble; for had divorce been permitted, the compensation secured by virtue of this law would have been too easily rendered void.

“Such then is the law of retaliation, which has furnished so many arguments against Israelite legislation, because it has been understood according to the letter by the very persons who most

the acme of moral perfection—whether this extreme disparagement—this entire reversal of the moral principle of the law of retaliation is truly his own work, or whether in this, as in so many other precepts, he was simply the imitator of the Bible and of the Pharisean sages: that the reply must here be in the affirmative is not doubtful.

The principle of not resisting violence is laid down in the Lamentations of Jeremiah,* in terms almost textually identical with those of the Gospels.

The prophet, in presenting the portrait of a just man, of one who, resting in the Lord, tranquilly awaits His help and bears the yoke thrown around his neck by others, adds, as a last effort of persecuted virtue, “He giveth his cheek to him who smiteth him.” Never was there a more striking and expressive metaphor.

The author of Proverbs says, “Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and He shall save thee.”†

“Say not, I will do so to him as he doeth unto me; I will render to the man according to his work.”‡

reproach the Jews with neglecting the spirit of Scripture. This law may be distinctly expressed in these words, Every one should endeavour, as much as lies in his power, to repair the injury which he has occasioned.”

The passage we have just quoted is extracted from an important work by R. Astruc, Assistant Rabbi to the Chief Rabbi at Paris (now at Brussels), entitled “Studies on the Pentateuch,” published in “Israelite Truth,” the year 1860, the fifth number. Consult also on this subject the splendid work of Judah Ben Halévy, “The Khosari,” book iii. §§ 46, 47; and J. Salvador, “The Institutions of Moses and of the Hebrew people.”

* Lamentations iii. 25 to 30.

† Proverbs xx. 22.

‡ Proverbs xxiv. 29.

“He that revengeth shall find revenge in the Lord, and He will surely keep his sins in remembrance.”*

Here we have the doctrine of the Pharisees on this point.

Of those who suffer without returning injuries, and of those who accept insults without replying to them, the prophet speaks when he says, “The friends of God shall shine like the sun, when he arises in all his glory.”†

If thy companions call thee an ass, put the saddle on thy back,‡ says another Pharisean Doctor, in language as figurative as that of the Gospel, in order to indicate that you should pardon injuries and give an example of humility.

In following the successive passages of the sermon on the mount, which has been for the last 1,800 years the moral manifesto of Christianity, we meet this serious injunction expressed by Jesus, “Ye have heard that it has been said of old time, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy,’ but I say unto you, love your enemies, and do good to those who hate you.”

Assuredly, this was not said by the contemporaries of Moses, by them who had heard this solemn exhortation, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; § thy neighbour, that is to say, all men, and not thy friends only, as the editors of the Gospel assert, thus falsifying the text and the spirit of this beautiful precept of fraternity and love.” ||

* Ecclesiasticus xxviii. 1.

+ חֶבֶרֶךְ קִרְיִיךְ חֲמֵרָא אוֹכְפָא לִיבִיךְ מוֹשׁ Talmud, Treatise Ioma, 23, col. 1.

‡ Talmud, Treatise Baba Kama, 87.

§ Leviticus xix. 18.

|| Our learned co-religionist, M. Munk, has devoted serious atten-

Again, this was not said by the Author of the admirable Pentateuch, in which we read, "Thou shalt not hate

tion to the investigation of the mode by which the Gospel writers were led to make this strange perversion, which is besides manifestly opposed to the doctrine of Jesus. In fact, the master of the Gospels more than once quotes the great moral precept of Leviticus, and always applies it to fellow-men in general, and not exclusively to friends. M. Munk observes that by translating incorrectly the word רֵעַ (neighbour) "friend," the Gospel was betrayed into this conclusion *à contrario* that we are enjoined to *hate* our enemy. ("Reflections on the Worship of the Ancient Hebrews," Cahen's Bible, t. iv.)

A characteristic episode in the Gospel indicates the very general signification attached by the Pharisean doctors to the word "neighbour," which, according to their view, as well as to that of Jesus, comprehended all mankind.

"A lawyer," says St. Luke (x. 25), "asked Jesus, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus replied, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. This do and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And

thy brother in thine heart, thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." *

"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou seest the ass of him who hateth thee lying under his burden, and dost forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help him." †

Neither could the wise Solomon, who said, "If thine enemy be hungry give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.‡ Rejoice not when thine enemy faileth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.§ Hate stirreth up strife, but love covereth up all sins" || have taught to the Hebrews these pretended precepts of hatred and vengeance.

Neither was it the sublime Psalmist, when he pronounced this beautiful maxim, "We must not hate the wicked, but wickedness;" ¶ when he exclaimed, "O my God, if I have ever rewarded evil for evil, yea, I have delivered him who was, without cause, mine enemy." **

Neither was it pious Job, who said in the midst of his affliction, "If I rejoice at the destruction of him that hateth me," or, "I lifted up myself when evil found him." ††

he said, He that showed mercy unto him. Go, and do thou likewise."

The Pharisees also accepted the word neighbour and the duties attached to it in its widest and most generous sense.

* Leviticus xix. 17, 18.

† Proverbs xxv. 21.

‡ Ibid. x. 12.

** Psalm vii. 4, 5.

† Exodus xxiii. 4, 5.

§ Ibid. xxiv. 17.

¶ Psalm

†† Job xxxi. 29.

Neither was it the wise author of Ecclesiasticus, that Jesus the son of Sirach, between whom and the son of Mary there exists so much affinity, when he said "Rejoice not over thy greatest enemy being dead."*

Neither was it the sages of Phariseism, one of the most illustrious of whom, Samuel the younger,† enjoined his disciples not to desire the misfortune of an enemy, and not to rejoice at his downfall.

Thus the traditions of Israel were wholly uniform in respect of this great moral question. Nor from the very first period of the exodus from Egypt, to that of the doctors of the Synagogue who preceded Jesus, did it vary in the slightest degree. The Jewish law never prescribed hatred of an enemy ; on the contrary, in a long series of touching precepts, it ever insisted on the returning good for evil ; it ever forbade the fostering in the heart of any sentiment of animosity, of any desire for revenge. And when Jesus said in his turn, "Do good unto those who hate you," he was but the echo, and the reproducer of the doctrine revealed by God Himself to the Hebrew people, and obeyed with pious fidelity by all the righteous in Israel.

The pardon of injuries, and good will and love towards those who have injured us, are but some of the many forms assumed by charity. But benevolence has another and no less elevated aim ; the alleviation of the misery of others, to give alms and assistance intelligently and opportunely to the poor, is one of the first duties of mankind, as it is one of the noblest manifestations of primitive fraternity. Jesus evidently could add nothing to the admirable ordinances concerning the

* Ecclesiasticus viii. 8.

† Perké-Aboth iv. 27.

exercise of charity, contained in Mosaism and the writings of the Hebrew doctors.

It is universally known that the inspired author of the Pentateuch gave a prominent place to beneficence among the highest social duties, and that he set apart, with touching solicitude, an important share of the products of the earth for the poor, the fatherless, and the widow.*

In the sacred language, charity has a name which eloquently expresses the religious duty pertaining to it, justice צדקה; and the exercise of the virtue is placed in all the books of Holy Writ, above all other duties. "Charity saves from eternal death." "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself and not be heard," † declares the wise Solomon.

"What I require of you in the name of the Eternal, exclaims the prophet Isaiah, is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?" "When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and to console him who is afflicted." ‡

"Whoso giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord," § teaches the author of Proverbs.

"The poor shall be as sons in thy house," || say the Pharisean doctors.

"Give unto him who is poor the best dish of your table, and to him who is naked the best of your garments," was prescribed in its turn by the traditional morality of Judea. Jesus could say nothing more and

* See principally on this head the remarkable precepts of Deuteronomy xxiv., xxv. and xxvi., as well as the splendid prayer given in the last mentioned chapter, 13 and following verses.

† Proverbs xxi. 13.

‡ Isaiah lviii. 7.

§ Proverbs xix. 17. מלוה יי חונן דל

|| Perké-Aboth, i.

¶ Yoreh Deah, 247, 6.

nothing better in reference to charity, but he expresses this pious duty, "Give alms in secret, and let not your left hand know what your right doeth."

Glorious and holy maxim on which one cannot ponder too long, but which others in Israel had equally proclaimed before the advent of the prophet of Nazareth.

"Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it will pray for thee. Shut up alms in thy storehouses, and it shall deliver thee from all affliction. It shall fight for thee against thine enemies better than a mighty shield and strong spear."*

"He who giveth alms in secret is greater than Moses himself," say the Phariseean doctors.

Israelitish morality recognises eight degrees of charity.†

The first and noblest is that of a man who supports the poor before his fall, either by gifts, by loans, or by institutions, in order to prevent his sinking into want and misery.

The second degree is that of the man who giveth without knowing and without being known.

The third degree is that of the man who knows the poor to whom he gives, but is not known by them. Thus did the sages; they secretly threw purses of money into the dwellings of the poor.

The fourth degree is that of the man who is known by the beggar, but to whom the recipient is unknown.

* Ecclesiasticus xxix. 15, 16.

† עושה צדקה בסתר גדלה ממשה רבנו R. Samcaï saw some one give a poor man a money in public, and said "It is as well not to give as to give ostentatiously and openly." Talmud, Treatise Chaquiga, I.

The fifth degree is that of the man who delivers alms, without being asked, from hand to hand.

The sixth degree is that of the man who does not give until he is asked.

The seventh degree is that of the man who gives less than he ought without real kindness.

Lastly, the lowest degree in the scale of charity is that of the man who gives with ill-temper and regret.*

We thus see that the Jewish doctors were not less explicit than the Gospel, in respect of secret charity, and that the sermon of the mount may have reiterated, but could not surpass, the great principles enforced by them.

“When thou prayest, continues the son of Mary, thou shalt not pray as the heathens do ; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

“It is better,” say the Pharisees, “to utter a short prayer with devotion, than a long one without fervour.” †

“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.”

In Ecclesiasticus we find an identical expression uttered by Jesus son of Sirach. ‡

“Lay up thy treasures according to the commandments of the Most High, and it shall bring thee greater profit than gold.”

I desire, said a Phariseean doctor, to amass inexhaustible treasure, while my fathers sought the perishable treasures of this world. §

* T. Ored Deah, 249.

† Talmud, Treatise Scabbath, 10, and Treatise Menachoth, 110.

‡ Ecclesiasticus, xxix. 14.

§ Talmud, Baba Bathra.

“Therefore, I say unto you,” concludes the Gospel, “take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Behold the fowls of the air, your Heavenly Father feedeth them, and causeth the lilies of the field to grow, for He knoweth that ye have need of these things. Take, therefore, no thought of the morrow. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, for all these things shall be given you in abundance.”

This exclusive confidence in the goodness of God, this placing man’s destiny wholly in the hands of the Lord of heaven and earth, this unlimited hope in Him who calls into existence and sustains all created beings, are the ever present themes of the Royal Psalmist’s inspiration. All the songs of David, without exception, breathe this deep trust in the providence of the Eternal.

But even the expression employed by Jesus, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, for those things shall be given you,” occurs word for word in the Psalms. “Fear ye the Lord, O ye his saints, for there is no want for them that fear Him,” exclaims the royal prophet. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”*

“The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish.”†

“Is it not He who giveth food to all flesh?”‡ “Thou openest Thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.§ He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young raven that cries.”||

“Stand still,” said Moses to the Hebrew people,

* Psalm xxxiv. 10, 11.

† Proverbs x. 3.

‡ Psalm cxxxvi. 25.

§ Ibid. cxlvii., cxlv. 16

|| Ibid. cxlvii. 9.

before any of these prophets, "and hold your peace, for the Lord shall fight for you." *

"He," say the Pharisean sages, "who, having but a piece of bread in his basket says, 'What shall I eat to-morrow,' is a man of little faith." †

Finally, Jesus recommends extreme reticence in passing judgment on other men, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." "And why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam in thine own eye?"

The doctors of the Synagogue, influenced by a like spirit of benevolence, and moderation, declared on their part, "Man should abstain from judging his friend and his enemy, for it is not easy to recognise the faults of a friend, or the merits of an enemy." ‡

And just as Jesus said, "According as ye judge others, so shall ye be judged," so they declared, "That he who judges his neighbour charitably, shall be judged himself charitably in heaven." §

Physicians first cure their own wound, poetically says the Middrasch-rabba, to signify that we must not blame in others those defects from which we ourselves are not exempt. ||

IV.

We might multiply these quotations, but the above will suffice; they prove that all the maxims which are

* Exodus xiv. 13, 14.

† כל מי שיש לי פת בסלו אומר מה אוכל אינו אלה מקטן
אמנך Talmud, Treatise Sota, 48, 6.

‡ Talmud, Treatise Ketouboth, 105, col. 2.

§ Talmud, Treatise Schabbath, 27, col. 2; Treatise Aboth, vii. § 6.

|| Middrasch Rabba, Bereschit, xxiii.

justly admired in the sermon on the mount had been long current, expressed in almost the same words, in Israel and in the teachings of the Jewish Synagogue. There was therefore, neither novelty, nor any proof of divinity for the Hebrews contemporary with Jesus, in the principles which he preached to the people, and in which the important doctrines of Moses and the prophets, and of the most illustrious and revered sages were simply reproduced.

Besides, Jesus closes this important sermon with a solemn declaration which is, as it were, a summary of its contents, and which expressly connects his doctrine with the precepts of the law and of the former prophets. "Do unto others," exclaimed he as a last exhortation, "as ye would they should do unto you, *for that is the law and the prophets.*"

Thus we are perfectly justified in restoring to Gospel morality its true and legitimate name, "*Israelitish morality.*" Above all are we in the right to repudiate energetically, on the authority of the decisive texts we have just read, the singular reproach cast on the ancient law, that of having taught and prescribed a negative morality. How often, indeed, has it been falsely stated, that the Gospel and the Gospel alone introduced that principle into the world, which enjoins us to do unto others what we desire should be done unto us ; while Judaism, it is affirmed, exhorted men *not* to do to others what they would not should be done unto them !

It is now clear whether this accusation against the Old Testament and against the Pharisean doctrine is well-founded. A judgment may now be formed, whether the law which enjoins us to "love our neighbour as ourself," and to take no revenge, but to render good for evil, is in

truth inferior to the most admired maxim of the Gospel and of Christianity.

Assuredly then, Jesus was not an innovator in the domain of morals ; he imitated the sages of Israel who preceded him, he reproduced their teaching, and almost verbally their expressions ; he borrowed from them their most beautiful precepts, and if his doctrine did create a revolution in the Pagan world, to the Hebrews it was but the echo of Moses, of David, of Solomon and of the Fathers of the Synagogue.

But in some respects the moral teaching of the son of Mary did deviate from that of the writings of the sacred authors, and on several very important points, the Jews themselves no longer recognised the grand principles which they had been previously accustomed to revere and to observe.

Let us briefly examine this new phase of the investigation in which we are engaged.

TWELFTH BOOK.

Bad trees should be burnt.—War.—Compelle intrare.—Reverence for parents.—From those who have nothing, much shall be taken.—The first shall be the last.—The rich excluded from the kingdom of heaven.—New Sermon on the Mount.

I.

IF an inspired prophet arose at the present time in the world, if he undertook the holy office of reconducting mankind to the immortal principles of virtue, of justice, and of truth, might he not in his turn with reason dispute certain strange maxims proclaimed by the son of Mary?

We have no hesitation in replying to this query in the affirmative. We see frequently indeed, thoughts embodied in the words of Jesus which doubtless had in the mind of their author a lofty significance, but which his contemporaries could not comprehend, and which, even at this period excite in us much surprise in many respects.

What must the Jews have thought when they were plainly told, “Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire,” and thus show themselves totally regardless of the amendment of the sinner?*

“What!” must they have replied, “is there no pity or mercy to be bestowed on this poor tree, the sterility of whose nature prevents it yielding any fruit? Would not

* Matthew iii. 16.

the gardener lavish all his skill, all his patience, all his love on its cultivation, and instead of tearing it up by the roots and condemning it for ever, would he not carefully watch it as long as a leaf remained on its branches?"

Again Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father. and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."*

And those who heard these threatening words may well have rejoined, "What! is this that religion of peace fraternity so long promised to suffering humanity? The prophets of Israel declared to us that on the advent of Messiah (Messenger), the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, that weapons of war shall be converted into instruments of labor, that concord and union, the love of God and man shall reign over all the earth. And you predict discord and hatred! What then is this new law, which threatens us with such terrible misfortunes. What then is this Gospel of the kingdom, which far from preaching peace, promises us a relentless conflict, not only a conflict between peoples, but a struggle in the sanctuary of domestic hearth between parents and children?"

The Master of the Gospel, while further developing and explaining this painful theory of parables and maxims, adds, "He that is not with me is against me."† Compel those who remain outside, to enter the house—compelle entrare.‡

And again might the sages of Israel have replied, who uttered this beautiful sentiment, "All the righteous, to

* Matthew x. 34, 35; Luke xii. 49.

† Luke xi. 23. ‡ Ibid.

whatever religion they belong, enjoy eternal life.”* What! are all those who are not adherents of the Gospel considered as enemies? But do you not see that you thus justify all fanaticism and all oppression? Do you not see again that you hereby fan the flame of war and hatred between men, and that by a species of moral dogma, you justify the disastrous prediction you yourself uttered when you declared that you came not to bring peace but the sword! What! are all those not members of the church, to be deemed its implacable adversaries? And would you, had you the power, condemn, curse and persecute eternally the ignorant, the simple-minded, and the sincere worshippers of other Gods? But you say, No! we will save them in spite of themselves, we will force them to accept that truth of which we alone are the apostles. “You will force them!” What! would you thus employ violence in the service of religion? Would you thus place a yoke of iron on soul and body in the name of the God of goodness and mercy! Instead of aiding by gentleness, persuasion, and by the clear light of reason, would you employ constraint and rigour in order to fill your house? Is that true morality? Is that eternal justice?

It is said in the Decalogue, “Honour thy father and thy mother.”† In Deuteronomy it is said, “Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother.”‡ In the life of the son of Mary occur many circumstances in which this filial duty seems to be entirely disregarded, and not without surprise, the Jews heard him express ideas apparently flagrantly contradicting these sacred principles.

* Talmud, Treatise Sanhedrim.

† Exodus xx. 12.

‡ Deuteronomy xxvii. 16.

Thus, at the moment when assembling his disciples around him, he began his predication, one of them, before following thus entreated him, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." But Jesus said unto him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury the dead." *

Another day when teaching in the Synagogue, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him, "Then one said unto him, 'Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.' But he answered and said unto him that told him, 'Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?'" †

In another and yet more characteristic circumstance, he testified still greater severity towards her on whose bosom he had lain. It was at the marriage at Cana. "And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." ‡ What he has to do with her! But maternal love, filial piety, the voice of the heart and of nature; what then had become of all these inexpressible sentiments that the sight only of a mother should awaken in the heart of a beloved child? What could the Hebrew people have thought, among whom reverence for parents and respect for family ties and affections were ever held so dear, on hearing these words?

And another day he said yet more explicitly, "And if any man come to me, and hate not his father, and his mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.§ And whosoever doth not bear his cross and

* Matthew viii. 21. † Ibid. xii. 47, 48. ‡ John ii. 4.

§ Si quis venit ad me et non odit patrem suum et matrem, et uxorem et filios, et fratres et sorores . . . non potest meus esse discipulus. Luke xiv. 26.

come after me, cannot be my disciple." Doubtless these words may be in some respects explained and justified, signifying in an exaggerated form that devotion to God should hold predominance over all our terrestrial affections and interests. But this exaggeration of expression must have entirely perverted the meaning and the character of his doctrines in the eyes of his Jewish contemporaries, opposed as they were to all to which they had previously adhered. In this infringement of the sacred principle of family life the traditions of Moses and the prophets of Israel could doubtless be no longer recognised. With this besides, were combined strange theories on social duties and right. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath."* What was this inconceivable and distributive justice ; and why threaten the indigent whether in worldly goods, or moral virtue, with being deprived of the little he possessed ? Again, Jesus says, "Whoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he who is greatest among you shall be your slave ; but many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."† A singular application of the principle of equality not to limit it to the placing men on the same level, but to re-establish authority and despotism by beginning at the opposite end of the social ladder and elevating the low above the high. Socialists and revolutionists have taken advantage of this theory in all ages, when they sought in their turn to oppress those who had for a shorter or longer period been their leaders or masters !

He also thus addressed a rich man whose piety and virtues were well known, but who declined to reduce

* Matthew xxv. 29.

† Ibid. xxiii. 11, 12.

himself to misery, by stripping himself of all his possessions to give them unto the poor : " Verily, I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."* And every one in fact, might have replied as did his disciples, What ! is the rich man who makes a pious and noble use of the gifts God has bestowed on him, who religiously fulfils all the duties of charity, of morality and virtue, is he to forego the happiness of doing good and the hope of eternal salvation, unless he fulfil the one condition of impoverishing himself and of holding out his hand for alms in his turn ? Here again, serious doubts must have entered the minds of those who listened to these predications of the new master.

II.

In presence of these incomprehensible maxims, a prophet of our time, an apostle of the unity of the human race and of its universal brotherhood, adopting in his turn the form of the authoritative sermon on the mount, might address coming generations in these terms :—

" You know that it is said in the Gospel, I came not to bring peace into the world, but discord. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household : but I say unto you, Let peace prevail in your dwellings, and never permit the faith in the Most High, to degenerate into a source of discord, hatred, and fratricidal strife. Ye have but one Father who is in

* Matthew xix. 23.

heaven ; and since, notwithstanding your errors, and notwithstanding the various forms under which you worship Him, He permitteth His bountiful sun to shine on you all without exception, and because He endoweth you all with intelligence and with physical and intellectual powers, imitate Him in His goodness and mercy ; love those who acknowledge the truth ; love those who walk in darkness ; persecute no one ; war with no one on account of his opinions, whether religious, moral, or political, and leave God Himself to punish His offenders."

You have seen that it is said in the Gospel, "If any one cometh unto me and hateth not his father or his mother, his brothers or his sisters, he is not worthy to be my disciple." But I say unto you, "Serve God with unswerving devotion, and above all else ; reverence the Heavenly Father of all mortals, but deem it not necessary to hate your parents for His sake. Never permit your worship of things divine, however ardent it may be, to weaken that family love which is the true basis of social life, and without which there can be no virtue, either public or private. Honour your father and your mother, as you would honour God whose representatives and messengers they are at the side of the domestic hearth ; never forget that the Decalogue has placed filial love at the head of all the moral duties it prescribes."

You know that the Gospel teaches, "That the first shall be the last, and the last shall be the first." And I say unto you there are neither first nor last ; you are all alike in the presence of the Eternal, you are all equal in life and in death ; there are no distinctions between you except such as are created by your passions and your

interests ; in the kingdom of heaven there is no difference, the only difference is between good and bad and all, whatever may have been their rank here below, are weighed in respect of virtue and of vice, with equal equity in the balance of Divine justice.

Finally, you know it is said in the Gospel, "The rich shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," but I say unto you, Do not encourage feelings of envy and hostility against those who are more fortunate than you ; but accept the portion God has granted you in this world with humility and resignation, and be assured that the rich, if an honest, virtuous and benevolent man will equally with the poor enter into that eternal life, and will there receive the reward he merits.

And above all, love the One, Only and Eternal God with all thy heart and with all thy soul ; love thy neighbour as thyself, whether he be Jew or Christian, Chinaman or Mussulman, whether he be for you or against you ; and look upon all men as your brothers, unto whom you are required to do the same as you would they should do unto you.

Would not this new sermon on the mount be as impressive and as just as that pronounced eighteen centuries ago by the son of Mary in the presence of the attentive Hebrews.

PART THE SECOND.

PART THE SECOND.

FIRST BOOK.

Events subsequent to the death of Jesus.—Tenacity of the incredulity of the Jews.—Moral DEICIDE.—Double objections.

SUCH were the life, the death, and the doctrine of the great reformer whose part it was to introduce a new religion into the world.

All the acts of his brief career, all that is most striking and characteristic in his predications have been here presented consecutively to our view. It appears to us that the justification of the Jewish people becomes therein as manifest as is the light of day. Neither the Messiah, nor a God revealed himself to the eyes of the oppressed people who were so impatiently awaiting a deliverer. The Hebrews were convinced when they condemned the son of Mary, that they were condemning one of those pseudo-Messiahs of whom so great a number had arisen at that period; their indignation perhaps was augmented on finding their long-cherished hope was once more disappointed. Besides, sentence was pronounced on Jesus according to all the forms prescribed by the laws of Israel; and that sentence was consistent with the ordinances of the sacred code, and a God alone could have arrested by a sudden revelation the decision of the magistrate and the hand of the executioner. But this decisive revelation was not made,

and the Jews retained the conviction that they had in Jesus punished according to law, a man who sought to be regarded as a God, an agitator who might have compromised the safety of the whole nation, a revolutionist who aimed at subverting the political and religious constitution founded by Moses in obedience to the revelation of the Eternal amid the thunders of Sinai.

Here we may offer an important remark, namely that subsequently to his punishment Jesus never revealed himself to the world. No public event followed his death, no revealing incident occurred to open the eyes of the Hebrews, or to alter the opinion which the various acts of his life caused them to entertain. In one word, the God-man, after having refused to grant them proofs of his divinity during his terrestrial existence, has ever since abandoned them to their involuntary error; he has evinced no further care of his people of Israel, for whose salvation and deliverance he nevertheless descended from heaven to earth. Since the painful scene of Golgotha, all manifestations have ceased from Jesus to the Jewish race and from Jesus to the whole world. The Apostles, it is true, announced the second advent; but though two thousand years have well nigh elapsed, the crucified God has not yet deigned to appear in the sight of men, in all the glory of his majesty, to diffuse light in all souls.

Jerusalem was destroyed; the Jews, dispersed among all the nations of the earth have carried with them their eternal hopes in the advent of Messiah the deliverer, and their inflexible incredulity respecting the son of Mary; persecuted, proscribed according to the prediction of their first legislator, yet awaiting with unshaken trust the hour of deliverance, of justice, and of restora-

tion. The apostles of Jesus Christ in their turn quitted Judæa, despairing of leading the flock of Israel into their fold. They carried the Gospel to the Gentiles, applying themselves to the service and success of their apostolate with activity, energy, zeal, and devotion, which were greatly aided by the circumstances amid which they were called forth. After three centuries of struggle and skilful efforts, they succeeded in effecting the acceptance by the Pagan world of that Christian doctrine, of that faith in the God-Christ, which had wholly failed amid the chosen race to whom it had first been preached.

“And (say the adversaries of Judaism) two facts subsequent to the life of Jesus should have convinced the Jews of the divinity of Christianity and of its founder. The misfortunes which have everywhere befallen them, the hatred to which they have been exposed in all their wanderings, are these not decisive proofs? Even unto this day, they suffer the punishment of the iniquity of Christ’s judges; the history of the Jewish race, according to the significant words of Pascal, exhibits with unflinching fidelity, that people’s condemnation and the proof of the truth of Christianity.”

Yet more, should not also the miraculous triumph of the Christian faith have convinced the Hebrew people? A few apostles, devoid even of any elementary instruction, simple fishermen, humble artisans won dominion over that Roman empire to whose laws the whole world had been subjected. They conquered despite their weakness, despite the coalition of all the imperial powers against them, despite the most relentless persecution; and they transformed that cross on which their master had expired, into the symbol of the faith and

worship of all nations. Can it be conceived that this victory could have been won without the will and the help of God? And is not Jesus Christ revealed with sufficient splendour by the triumph of the universal church? In resisting this dazzling light by obstinately denying these miracles, the Jews committed a second crime as unpardonable as the condemnation of Jesus. They voluntarily rendered themselves guilty of a second *Deicide*, by which they justly became the objects of the indignation of mankind.

Are these reproaches better deserved than those which we have previously considered? It is our duty to examine this question, and to leave no one element unconsidered, of the great suit instituted against the Jewish people.

Let us first ascertain if the spread of Christianity over the world can be accounted for by supernatural causes and by direct divine inspiration only, or whether it was not on the contrary, rather the simple result of circumstances essentially human and political in their character, and calculated to corroborate, rather than to counteract, the opinion, or it may be said the prejudices entertained by the Israelites in respect of triumphant Christianity. Further, let us examine whether the hatred of which the Jews have been the victims, whether the cruel persecutions to which they have been subjected for eighteen centuries are not due to causes which are wholly and evidently so natural, that it is needless to associate the name of the God of Justice, Mercy, and Love with deeds of wrath, vengeance and blood, and with crimes of rapine and homicide.

A rapid exposition of the means which the most intelligent of the Apostles employed in order to influence

Pagan society, and of the political and moral condition which furthered their enterprise will furnish a sufficient reply to the first of these questions.

A compendious investigation into the general situation of the Jews, in their relations to the Roman world and the Catholic world will answer the second.

SECOND BOOK.

Development of Christianity.—Respect evinced by Jesus for the Jewish law.—Prohibition against union with the Gentiles.—Convictions and aims of the Apostles.—Their words and acts after the death of Jesus.—Their obedience to traditional ordinances.—Saul, disciple of Gamaliel.—His inspiration on the road to Damascus.—He abandons the conversion of the Jews and undertakes that of the Gentiles. He abolishes the law.—Progress of Paulism.—Opposition of the Apostles.—Paul goes to Jerusalem.

I.

NEITHER in the doctrine of its founder, nor in the principles of the primitive church was to be found that germ of universal dominion by which it was transformed into Catholicism.* To the important revolution, to the species of dogmatic *coup d'état* accomplished by the Apostle Paul, are to be ascribed the efforts of the Christian sect for the conversion and the evangelisation of the Gentiles. A series of political events and exigencies soon caused the assumption by Catholicism of forms and symbols which differed greatly from the doctrine of the first apostles, and its adoption of laws, of a priesthood, and of a centralization far more closely allied to Paganism than to the character of Christianity.

In fact, it does not appear from the Gospel that Jesus was at all aware of the consequences that his doctrine

* Catholicism is derived, as it is well known, from two Greek words, *Katholon*, signifying "over all, universal."

was destined one day to produce on the future of humanity. In him we see only an energetic reformer of the Hebrew people, but we nowhere perceive that he betrayed any intention of passing beyond the borders of Palestine, or of bestowing on other nations the blessing of the new alliance which he preached to the Jewish population.

If some parables, expressed in terms more or less obscure and mysterious, slightly indicate an appeal to the Gentiles to share in the Messianic banquet,* and to the culture of the vineyard of the Lord by the hands of strangers,† the positive declarations of the Master of the Gospel leave no doubt as to his real intention. In the very early period of his predications he exclaims, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."‡ Elsewhere he bids his disciples to "go not into the way of the Gentiles, but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."§ Another day, on refusing to cure the daughter of a Canaanite, he declared, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs."|| Besides, his whole life, from birth to death presents a continuous and striking homage offered to the traditional law of Israel. We see him religiously celebrating the various festivals of Judaism and fulfilling

* Matthew, compare viii. 10 and the following ; xxi. 33, etc. ; xxii. 1 and the following ; xxiv. 14.

† Matthew vi. 1—8 ; xxii. 35—40.

‡ Ibid. v. 17 and the following ; Luke xvi. 17.

§ Ibid. x. 5 and following.

|| Ibid. xv. 21 and following ; Mark vii. 24 and following.

all its ceremonial practices, and the last meal—that solemn supper in which he points to him who is to be his betrayer—was virtually the scrupulous, although symbolized observance of one of the most ancient usages of the Synagogue. The Apostle Paul eulogises him for having been ever faithful to the law of his fathers, and for having on all occasions obeyed the commandments of the sacred writers.*

These general observations which might be indefinitely multiplied prove that Jesus doubtlessly purposed to introduce a reform into the midst of Judaism by appearing as Messiah, the deliverer announced by the prophets, but to that aim alone did he limit his aspirations.

According to Jesus, Judaism was to obtain to the end of time in all the purity of its fundamental principle ; in pursuance of his own declaration, he came not to destroy, he came to fulfil the law.

II.

This conviction dwelt yet more firmly in the minds of the apostles. From the very commencement, the deliverance of Israel was their one thought, their only aim, their sole pre-occupation. We see that after the condemnation and death of Jesus they became anxious and disheartened when struck with a painful doubt; they exclaimed, "We trusted that it would have been he who should have redeemed Israel, and to-day is the third day since he died,"† and when Jesus arisen from the

* Paul, Epistle to the Galatians iv. 4. Also on these several points, Matthew xxvi. 17; vi. 4; Luke iv. 16.

† Luke xxiv. 21.

dead, showed himself in the midst of his disciples, Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel.”*

Thus, the literal fulfilment of the prophecies, the real restoration of the throne of David, the removal of a foreign yoke from the Holy Land was virtually what was expected by the apostles. Israel and the law of God were ever the pivot of their faith, the basis of their hopes.

Their conduct after the death of their master permits no doubt on this head. From that day forth, they formed a new sect in Judaism, but they did not sever themselves from the traditions of the Synagogue, they did not reject the unlimited authority of the sacred writings, any more than did the other Jewish sects—the Essenes, the Sadducees, the Samaritans, &c. They maintained only that the promised liberator came in the person of Jesus, and that this new standard must be their rallying point. It is a remarkable fact that they did not at that time declare that Jesus was God. The indignation which arose on all sides in Israel, even among his disciples, when Jesus claimed a divine character seems to have cooled the zeal and shaken the conviction of the apostles as to this point. They described Jesus simply as a celebrated man, a descendant of King David, destined to fulfil all the prophetic promises. This is clearly shown in the Acts of the Apostles. “O Israelites,” exclaims Peter to the assembled multitude, “hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, by wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.”†

* Acts of the Apostles i. 6.

† Ibid. ii. 22.

“Therefore David being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.”*

Hence the only point of discussion between the Jews and the apostles was whether the Messiah, the son of David had come or not; but it in no way related to the principles of the law.† The apostles, following the example of Jesus, remained faithful to Jewish observances. The Acts represent them to us as meeting every day in the Temple, praising God and having favour with all people.‡ We see Peter and John go out together to the Temple at the usual hour of prayer. The portrait of James, the brother of Jesus, has been preserved for us in Christian tradition by the hand of Eusebius.§ After the death of the master, he became the chief at the new church in Jerusalem.

James is there called a true Jew, devoted from his birth to be a Nazarene, his whole life consecrated to religious observances, passing his day in the Temple, entering the sanctuary with the High Priest, and religiously obeying all the ordinances of the law. Only, the apostles and their chief availed themselves of their habitual visits to the Temple to preach Christ, the saviour whom God had sent in order to give remission of their sins to the Hebrews.|| The people listened to these discourses; priests and magistrates permitted them to be delivered without interruption; the Jews everywhere saluted James with the Epithet of “the just,” and the bulwark of Israel.¶ In fact, the apostles appearing to

* Acts of the Apostles ii. 30.

† Luke xxiv. 53.

‡ Acts of the Apostles iii. 1.

§ Ecclesiastical History, ii. 23.

|| Acts of the Apostles ii.

¶ Eusebius, loc. cit.

have abandoned the idea of the divinity of Christ and to limit themselves to that of a Messianic mission, were considered to be a sect that offered no serious danger to the Jewish faith ; no more idea prevailed of proscribing them than the Sadducees and the Essenes.

Here again we should appreciate the liberty permitted by Phariseism to thought and speech in Israel. Provided there was no infringement of the fundamental law revealed on Sinai, provided that the individual lived in accordance with the gênerâl principles of Judaism, he had the right of preaching to the people according to the inspiration of his conscience and of his will. Thus, the apostles could freely maintain that the Messiah had arrived ; nowhere does it appear in the "Acts" that this opinion, though generally rejected by the people, produced at the outset any schism in the church and early Christianity.

But at the same time, we must particularly call attention to the fact, that the disciples of Jesus showed themselves to be scrupulous observers of the Jewish law ; they were indignant at the thought of violating any of the rites and commandments of the Synagogue. On a solemn occasion, when a centurion named Cornelius, touched by the divine power, begged Peter to come in order that he might admit him, the apostle himself hesitated to have any intercourse with one uncircumcised, or to partake of any impure food at his house. According to the apostolic narrative, it was necessary that God should visit Peter with a positive vision, ere he would consent to defile himself by the use of forbidden viands. But on his return to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, " Why wentest thou in to men uncircumcised, and why didst thou eat

with them?"* Peter defended himself, described his vision, and all the brethren held their peace, and were surprised "that God had granted also unto the Gentiles the gift of repentance which giveth life." From all these facts it may be clearly inferred that the apostles accepted the exhortation of their master according to the letter, when he enjoined them "Not to follow after the heathens, but to seek out the lost sheep of the House of Israel." These men were true Israelites in the strictest sense of the word, not any of them had the slightest intention of abandoning Judaism; on the contrary, all their efforts tended to the one object, that of ensuring to it the victory which had so long been promised to it by Moses and the prophets.

The exclusively Jewish character with which the Christian sect was invested continued until the appearance of the Apostle Paul. Saul, a disciple of Gamaliel, one of the the most celebrated Jewish doctors, appeared at first among the most violent opponents of the new doctrine; he persecuted its disciples with the fiery vehemence which he displayed, and continued to display in all things, alike in his sympathy and his hatred, until the closing years of his existence. One day while pursuing his road to Damascus, a sudden illumination from on high took possession of his soul, he thought he heard a divine voice commanding him to serve henceforth that mysterious Christ, whose disciples he had hitherto persecuted. Converted by this vision, he became one of the most fervent apostles of the new church, changed his name from Saul to Paul, clothed the Christian doctrine in a new formula, and by assigning to it a new aim,

* Acts of the Apostles x. and xi.

transformed it entirely. The character of the Apostle Paul and the revolution which he effected in the apostolate deserve to be minutely examined.

III.

PAUL being profoundly imbued with the practical spirit of Judaism, and having derived from the lessons of the great Pharisean doctors the pre-eminently social tendency which characterises the teachings of the fathers of the Synagogue, comprehended easily that the new religious sect would infallibly wholly die out, if it remained within the narrow limits which Jesus had assigned to it and beyond which the apostles had refused to go.

In fact, to hope to convince and to convert the Jews, by preaching to them either the advent of the Messiah, or the apparition of a new God in the son, and an emanation of the Eternal in the person of Jesus, was wholly utopian. According to the nature of facts, as according to that of principles, this double belief would necessarily meet with invincible obstacles in the Hebrew people.

The appearance of the pretended Messiah on the earth had virtually effected no change in the material condition of the Israelites. After, as before, they remained subject to a foreign power, the throne of David was not re-established, and the national independence was not reconquered. Thus, it was clearly impossible that Israel could recognise in the prophet of Nazareth him who according to the prophecy was destined to be its liberator. The doctrine of Jesus had created a new sect in the midst of the Jewish people, a further source of division; but the Romans continued to be all powerful in Judea, and the Hebrew patriots trem-

bled with impatience under the yoke. Amidst such circumstances it was difficult to convince the Jews that the Messianic era had arrived.

In matters of principle, the Jews appeared yet more refractory ; they had inflexibly condemned Jesus because he had proclaimed himself God, and because he either could not, or would not give them decisive proofs of his divinity. After his death, no visible, positive and public fact had occurred calculated to establish his divine character and to reveal the signs so vainly solicited from the master of the Gospel during his life. The Jews therefore, had no motive for abandoning that dogma, the absolute Unity of God, which formed the essential basis and vital force of Mosaism ; and the apostles were as hopeless of converting them to the doctrine of any hypostasis, as subsequent persecutions were powerless to make them acknowledge the trinity.

For the Christian sect there was no chance of a future, if they confined themselves to Judea. Besides, would the apostles have been more capable than their master of winning those whom the predications of Jesus had failed to convince ? In respect of morals, they presented nothing new to the Jews, and in point of dogma they more and more impaired the great principle of the Unity on which the secular law of Israel rested. Paul understood well, that only beyond Palestine were the development and success of the Christian idea possible. As the Jews would not accept the Gospel, it must be carried to the Gentiles. The enterprise was a bold one, and worthy of attracting an exceptional mind. Paul devoted himself to it with a self-sacrifice and an energy which cannot be too greatly admired. He openly declared himself the apostle of the Gentiles, and quitting the

holy land and forsaking the apostles who timidly shut themselves up in Jerusalem, he rushed daringly into the midst of the Pagan world, there to preach Christ, the god-man dying on the cross for the salvation of the human race. Paul departed without consulting the apostles, without coming to any understanding with them either as to the means, or the aims of his apostolate. The miraculous revelation which he pretended to receive on the road to Damascus, and which moreover, took place without any witnesses, had put him, he affirmed, in direct communication with Jesus Christ. He had no order or mission to receive from any mortal, since the divine and crucified Lord had vouchsafed unto him instruction, to guide him on his future course. He set forth, traversing Arabia during three years; then, after a short halt at Damascus, he went to Syria and Asia Minor, and employed ten years in visiting the various provinces of these countries.*

IV.

WITH the same instinct with which he discerned that Christianity was lost, if shut up in Judea and content to become, like Esseneism and Sadduceeism, simply a Jewish sect, he soon perceived that the Gospel would not be accepted by the Gentiles if it was offered to them under the severe form of the law and rites of Israel. Paul, consequently, on his own authority and justifying the means by the end, at once severed himself from all allegiance with the doctrine of the Bible and that of the Gospel. Instead of saying with Jesus that every iota of the law should be fulfilled, he openly declared that it

* Epistle to the Galatians i. 5.

should be for ever abolished, with all its ceremonials and all its ordinances.* Instead of imitating the Apostles, who were displeased with Peter on account of an accidental violation of the commandments of the Pentateuch, he preached the uselessness and unavailableness of these commandments. Instead of believing, as did the first disciples of Jesus, that from the Jews salvation was to proceed, and that in Judaism, sublimated in the Messianic era, all the nations of the earth would be united, he taught that it was of little moment, in regard to salvation, whether the individual was Jew, Greek, or Roman, circumcised or uncircumcised, but that all men were equal and free, and all were one in Jesus Christ.†

This was the first important compromise attempted between Christianity and the Pagan world. Amidst the manifest impossibility of inducing the heathens to adopt the customs of Judaism, especially those which relate to ceremonial observances and circumcision, Paul wholly and simply renounced the Jewish law, and confined himself to the requiring from the Gentiles faith in Jesus Christ.‡

The celebrated Epistle to the Galatians contains a complete statement of the new doctrine; Paul therein frankly enjoins non-circumcision and faith without works. By the appropriation and application of the

* Epistle to the Galatians v. 5, and all the first epistle to the Corinthians.

† Epistle to the Corinthians i. 9; Epistle to the Romans x. 12; Epistle to the Galatians iii. 28 and v. 1, 13; Epistle to the Corinthians iii. 17.

‡ Epistle to the Romans iii. 30, iv. *passim*; Epistle to the Galatians iii. 1—13.

great principles of Habakkuk, "The just shall live by faith," he with one stroke destroyed the entire law and its ceremonial ordinances.

V.

UNDER these conditions, his work made rapid progress. The people whose conversion Paul had undertaken, being no longer required to accept either the covenant of the flesh, or a worship with which were associated manifold and complicated prohibitions, lent a willing ear to the prelections of the fiery apostle. Besides, the general circumstances amid which these predications were uttered singularly promoted their influence and success. The equality of all men before God was virtually what the Apostle of the Gentiles preached; in fact, universal liberty and redemption. He taught that the Eternal had sent His son upon the earth to be incarnated in a human body and to die an ignominious death, in order to save all humanity by this divine sacrifice; he said that henceforth there were to be neither great nor small, neither masters nor slaves, but that there was but one Lord, the Christ, a mysterious and universal body of whom all men are the limbs. He added that the most splendid ceremonial worship, sacrifices and offerings were wholly valueless, but faith sufficed to ensure eternal happiness, and the humblest who believed is preferred by Christ to the wealthiest who offered hecatombs on the altars of their gods.

All these principles, all these promises were wonderfully suited to the populations of that time. None are ignorant of the fact that slavery and degeneracy were the incurable social plagues of antiquity. During a long

previous period, low mutterings, sometimes rising to formidable insurrections had given the Roman aristocracy warning that by indulgence in such vices, they would assuredly sooner or later work their own ruin. The inauguration of the Imperial form of government, the extreme centralisation by which the weight of the iron hand of the Rome of the Cæsars, and the exactions and the cruelties of the pro-consuls were felt in the remotest corners of the known world, had excited an impatience which the spirit of nationality often ripened into bloody revolt. The Romans could only hold dominion over the whole world by rivetting ever closer the fetters of their slaves. He who came to preach liberty and equality to all these enslaved peoples, who in the name of a new God, announced to them an universal deliverance, had he not found unfailing means of securing attention and of gathering in a short time, numerous proselytes from among them around him? Wherever Paul appeared, his glowing utterances produced a profound impression; he organised everywhere real associations under the name of churches, which, communicating with each other, soon covered Syria and Asia Minor, and subsequently Macedonia and Epirus, with a net-work of secret societies, whose political influence and character we will investigate later.

VI.

BUT in the midst of this colossal enterprise, Paul suddenly found himself checked by the other apostles, who were alarmed of the deep abyss he had dug between Judaism and rising Christianity.

It will be remembered that the first disciples of Jesus

had remained scrupulously faithful to the original doctrine of their master and to the law of Israel. We have seen that they would not permit one of their number to eat at the table of the heathen, or to pollute himself by the use of forbidden meats ; we have also seen that religiously observing all the ceremonial of worship, they were resolved to devote themselves to the instruction of Israel, and not to suffer, as the Gospel expresses it, "that the bread of the children should be thrown to strange dogs."

When they became aware of the singular and fundamental concession, of the unexpected compromise by means of which Paul effected the conversion of the Gentiles, their emotion was extreme. They were terrified at this great deviation from the primitive doctrine, and they sent emissaries from Jerusalem to Antioch, then the central point at which Paul exercised his apostolate, who were charged to re-establish the Gospel teaching which had been thus manifestly impaired by the ardent apostle of the Gentiles. These emissaries addressed themselves directly to the people, and declared to the faithful "that they could not be saved, if they were not circumcised according to the law of Moses, and if they did not wholly observe the law."*

When the new converts heard these words, they were sorely distressed. What was this law of which they had never heard ; was it indeed necessary to become Jews in the flesh in order to aspire to that salvation so solemnly promised ? And many of them refused to incur so heavy an obligation.

Paul, with his clear good sense, well understood the terrible blow hurled against his infant work ; he felt that

* Epistle to the Galatians, *passim*.

all would be lost, if he did not go himself to Jerusalem to plead his cause, if he did not obtain the acquiescence of the apostles in the system which he deemed it right to pursue, and in which he had so happily succeeded.

On the result of this step depended the future of Christianity. Paul felt that should the immediate disciples of Jesus pronounce his condemnation, he would fail in his enterprise, and the triumph of which he thenceforth felt secure would be transformed into complete defeat; if approved by them, he would derive fresh strength from their concurrence.

He hesitated no longer, but betook himself to Jerusalem and to the presence of the twelve Apostles, in order to lay before them the specific character and conditions of the Gospel, as preached by him to the Gentiles.

This conference, at which the principles by which the new church was to be regulated were first discussed, deserves special consideration. It was the earliest compromise between Apostolic Christianity and Paganism; and it not only involved the rejection by the Apostles of the formal traditions of the synagogue, but it also constituted an important deviation from the doctrines of Jesus.

THIRD BOOK.

Conference and compromise at Jerusalem.—Paul adheres at first to the resolutions therein adopted.—He soon deviates from them.—Conflict at Antioch.—The resistance of Paul.—Epistle to the Galatians.—Immutability of the law.—Epistle of James in support of the law.—Insubordination of Paul.—Conflict at Corinth.—Paul returns to Jerusalem.—He there makes public apology.—He is put in prison and sent to Rome.—Summary.

THE discussion which took place at Jerusalem between Paul and the other apostles, if we judge by the documents and reports of witnesses that remain, must have been extremely violent, as the real question to be ascertained was whether the Gentiles should or should not be subjected to circumcision and to the observances of the Jewish law. Paul was accompanied by his favourite disciple Titus, a Greek by birth, and a recent convert who had been exempted, like the other Gentiles evangelised by Paul, from the covenant in the flesh. The high position of Titus, the zeal which he evinced for the new faith, the important apostolic missions entrusted to him by Paul, all combined to offer a striking example of what might be hoped from the Gentiles, if they were exonerated from circumcision and works, and if faith alone was required of them. Paul hoped to convince the chief Christians of Jerusalem by this all-powerful fact; he therefore presented himself, escorted by Titus, to this solemn assembly which the Christian tradition incorrectly terms the first "Council of Jerusalem."

The discussion was stormy. The ultra-liberality of Paul's doctrine alarmed the first disciples of Jesus; they no longer recognised therein the teachings of their master, and they clearly perceived that the adoption of this course would annihilate every hope of convincing the Jews. What then would be the basis of the new Church, from the day on which this rupture between Judaism and the new sect should be definitely accomplished; from the day when, after the entire modification of the dogma and spirit of the Sacred Writings, their ordinances and texts should likewise be rejected? What would be the rules and the principles of that new Church?

Paul energetically repudiated any return to Jewish tradition. He had received, he declared, a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. According to his strange expression, "He is dead to the law, for he through the law is dead to the law, and if he built again the things that he destroyed, he would make himself a transgressor,"* he declared that he would not yield, that he refused to subject himself to what was required of him, that he had a right to preach the Gospel to the uncircumcised, and that he would continue his apostolate.† He especially pointed out that were he compelled to modify his doctrine, he would thereby endanger the result of all he had previously done and compromise all he might in future effect.‡

The effects produced by Paul were really considerable. A great many Gentiles had adopted Paulism, and his broad theories had widened the narrow horizon of the apostles of Jerusalem. The rising Church saw

* Epistle to the Galatians, ii. 18, 19.

† Ibid. ii. 4, 5.

‡ Ibid. ii. 2.

flocking from all parts children to whom Judaism had not given birth. To arrest this movement of proselytism would have been singularly imprudent. A decisive step was taken: the pagan consented to recognise and accept Jesus Christ and through him the God of the faith of Israel. Would it have been a wise policy suddenly to close against them the door which a tolerant hand had half-opened before them? Would it have been right to disorganise and dissolve the churches which had arisen at the voice of the indefatigable apostle, in Syria, Asia Minor and Greece?

These considerations produced a compromise by which to each party was secured the right of adopting, without either ceding any of their respective principles, different methods for the greatest success of the new enterprise. Paul retained the mission of preaching the Gospel to the uncircumcised and Peter to the circumcised,* combining with it the faithful observance of the whole Mosaic law. The apostles did not compel Titus the beloved disciple of Paul to submit to circumcision, and the two parties, the one consisting of James, Peter and John, the other of Paul and Barnabas, offered each other the hand of fellowship as a sign of association.† In permitting Paul again to depart in order to carry on his apostolate, they only recommended him, according to the *Epistle to the Galatians*,‡ not to forget the poor of Jerusalem; but according to the *Acts of the Apostles*,§ while consenting not to enforce circumcision on the Gentiles, the twelve exacted from Paul that he should require the faithful of his Churches to abstain from blood, from torn flesh, from all meats

* Epistle to the Galatians, ii. 7, 8.

† Ibid. 9.

‡ Ibid. 10.

§ Acts, xv. 20 and following.

that had been sacrificed to idols, and from all impure connections.*

II.

IF the texts of the *Acts* are to be believed, Paul must have faithfully fulfilled his new mission within the prescribed limits ; he even did not hesitate in certain cases to subject several of his disciples to circumcision. The chapter which follows the one we have just quoted, exhibits him arriving at Lystrum and gaining a new disciple, Timothy, whom he circumcised when he went forth with him.† The text adds that afterwards these two went together from town to town, prescribing as a rule to the faithful to keep that which had been ordained by the apostles and the priests of Jerusalem.‡ But the fiery spirit of the evangelising apostle of the Gentiles could not long submit to the legal discipline to which his colleagues had sought to restrict him. Peter, who during the life and after the death of his master Jesus, had always shown great inconsistency and indecision, aroused a new conflict as serious as the first, of which Antioch became the theatre.

Peter had come to Antioch, where allowing himself to be led away by the example of Gentiles whom Paul had converted, he eat with the pagans and openly violated the ordinances of the Jewish law. James, who in virtue of his position as brother of Jesus, had been dignified with the title of chief of the Church at Jerusalem, having learnt these circumstances, sent special messengers § to Antioch, charged to address serious reproaches to Peter and to the other believers. Their remonstrances must have had great effect, for their

* *Acts*, xv. 28, 29.

† *Ibid.* xvi. 3.

‡ *Ibid.* 4.

§ The text of the Epistle to the Galatians permits the existence

consequence was not only a final separation between Peter and the Gentiles, but also the alienation from them of Barnabas the companion of Paul's apostolate. The other Jews in Antioch, says the Epistle of the Galatians, followed the example of the apostles and abandoned the Gentiles. Paul on hearing these facts, which again imperilled the past success and all the future of his predications, yielded to a violent fit of passion. To this feeling of irritation the Epistle to the Galatians is due ; it is the most interesting record of the epoch, that which reveals to us with the greatest precision the means used to attract foreign nations, the struggles in which the apostles of the Gentiles had to engage and the compromises to which the Christian doctrine was successively subjected.

Paul's indignation against Peter and the other apostles was extreme and broke forth into abuse : " I withstood him to the face (said he in his epistle), because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, and using hypocrisy, he desired to compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews, though living himself like the Gentiles and not like the Jews." * The words are significant ; they prove that the compromise of Jerusalem had worked no real solution, and that virtually the question to be ascertained was whether the Gentiles could or could not be admitted into the Church, without being subjected to all the ordinances of the Jewish law. Thus Paul had obtained nothing whatever ; the fundamental principle of his

of no doubt on this head. Peter, it is said, eat with the Gentiles before the arrival of some persons sent by James, "*Quidam à Jacobo*," Epistle to the Galatians, ii. 12.

* Epistle to the Galatians, ii. 11—14.

work was ever attacked anew ; the immediate disciples of Jesus remained inflexible in the matter of ceremonial, and all that Paul, the converter of the Gentiles had said and done among strange peoples was thenceforth considered as null and void.

The grief of the apostle in presence of this new danger was profound, but his energy was equal to the danger itself. He cries in accents of despair to the Galatians : " O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should rebel against the truth ? " * Have I indeed bestowed upon you labour in vain ? Am I therefore become your enemy ? † Ye did run well, who then hindered you ? ‡ He passionately denounced those who endeavoured to separate his disciples from him in order to convert them to their own erroneous teachings ; then setting forth the whole of his doctrine in yet stronger terms, he again insisted with extreme violence on the vanity of the works of the law :—" The law is of no avail," cries he, " faith alone availeth, for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. § Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us like children unto Christ, in order that we might be justified by faith, but after that faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Thus the question was once more clearly put ; notwithstanding the repeated warnings of the apostles of Jerusalem, Paul did proclaim the abolition of the Jewish law and of all the

* Epistle to the Galatians, iii. 1.

† Ibid. iv. 11 and 16.

‡ Ibid. v. 7.

§ Ibid. iii. 10.

works of the law. James, to whom his relationship to Jesus and his recognised authority secured such powerful influence on the Christian society of the period, deemed it right to re-establish the truth of the teachings of Jesus, in opposition to the errors of the apostle; with this object he wrote his famous epistle, which furnishes a peremptory reply to the principles of Paulism.

“Faith that has not works,” exclaims he, “is dead being alone. Man is justified by his works and not by faith alone. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”*

Thus, the effect of the conflict at Antioch was to render more manifest the radical disagreements which existed between Paul and the other apostles. It ended in the solemn condemnation of Paulism by the head of the rising Church, and in the declaration that absolute obedience to all the observances of the Jewish law was the sole means to ensure salvation.†

III.

BUT Paul was not the man to submit thus easily. We have seen that he boasted of having openly resisted Peter the first of the twelve. In his Epistle to the Galatians, he had even dared to pass a public censure on him who was chosen by Jesus to be the corner stone of the future church. He continued preaching against the law; and

* Epistle to St. James, ii.

† The much abused Pharisees were far more tolerant in respect of the observance of the law. He who fulfils with sincerity, say they, a single precept is worthy to be inspired with a spirit of prophecy. Yalkut, p. 69; 2 Talmud Treatise Chaghigah, p. 9.

the apostles of Jerusalem again alarmed, organised a counteracting mission in opposition to the bold innovator, of which a proof exists in the Epistle to the Corinthians.

The struggle caused by the doctrine of the Gentile Apostle broke out this time at Corinth, one of the most important communities founded by Paul. From the indications in the second of these memorable Epistles, it appears certain that envoys, dispatched from Jerusalem and bearing important letters of recommendation,* having arrived at Corinth, severely condemned the principles professed by Paul, and organised a formidable party to which Paul himself applies the name of the "party of Peter."†

This party was, as at Antioch, essentially Judaising ; they declared that salvation could not be won, save by entire submission to all the ordinances of Mosaism ; further, the envoys of the Church of Jerusalem, in order more effectually to oppose the illegal tendencies of Paulism, transferred the discussion to more delicate ground : they denied that Paul had been invested by any one with the right of preaching the Gospel, and they thus endeavoured to shake the very foundations of his spiritual power. We may infer the gravity of the strife from the ardour with which Paul defended himself on this head ; he stated that he had received his mission from Jesus Christ only, that he had seen in person the Man-God ; that he was free, that he was an Apostle equally with the others ; that to no one had he to render account, either of his actions or of his words.‡ In

* 2 Epistle to the Corinthians, iii. 1 and following.

† 1 Corinthians, i. 12.

‡ Ibid. ix. 1 ; xv. 8 ; 2 Corinthians, v. 13 ; xii. 1 and following.

another place he haughtily declares, "that he deems himself in nothing inferior to the very great apostles, and that he has worked more than all of them collectively."* "Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more."†

Thus war was declared anew between the evangelising apostle of the Gentiles and the other disciples of Jesus. But this time it was not to be terminated by a mere compromise. The adherents of the ancient law completely carried the day.

In truth, we see Paul in the Acts of the Apostles‡ after this new and singular occurrence, return once more to Jerusalem in order doubtless, to give an explanation of his conduct and to answer the accusations preferred against him. The first thing that James and the priests of the community required of him was that he should make a public apology and a solemn recantation of his former doctrine. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law, and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. Do therefore this; take them, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them: and all may know that those things whereof they were informed

* 2 Corinthians, xi. 5; xii. 11; 1 Corinthians, xv. 10.

† 2 Corinthians, xi. 18 and following.

‡ Acts, xxi. 20 and following.

concerning thee are nothing; and that thou thyself keepest the law.”*

Paul yielded to this condition, although it involved an entire repudiation of the principles of his apostolate. He who had so bitterly reproached Peter with being guilty of hypocrisy at Antioch when he pretended to Judaize, had recourse like him to dissimulation. He publicly performed ceremonies which were intended to convince those who were present that he was a faithful observer of the Mosaic ordinances. But the people were not deceived by this comedy, they recognised in him, notwithstanding this pretence, a true apostate from the Jewish law, and rose against him. His presence in the Temple caused a disturbance which the Roman soldiers had great difficulty in quelling. It is a remarkable circumstance that the Pharisees did all in their power to save him.† Paul perceiving the kindness of these popular chiefs, uttered a fresh falsehood by exclaiming, “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”‡ Thus, he not only denied his own doctrine in order to submit to the will of the Apostles, he went still further, and claimed the right to be reckoned among those Phariseean doctors whom Jesus had censured so severely.

By this double disavowal of his past life he did not succeed in calming the irritation of the populace. The Roman tribune was compelled to arrest him, in order to put an end to the general agitation. He was confined in the prison of Cæsarea; having claimed the title of a Roman citizen, he was at the close of two years sent to

* Acts, xxi. 20 and following. † Ibid. xxiii. 6 and following.

‡ Ibid. 6.

Rome, where he at first, in vain endeavoured to win over the Jewish colony inhabiting the city of the Cæsars* to his doctrine, and where he soon after undertook the evangelisation of the other inhabitants of the eternal city.

IV.

COULD the former opinions of the Jews respecting Jesus Christ and his doctrine have undergone any modification during the period that we have just considered? What great revolution had been made in proof of the divinity of the founder of the new religion? None. Far from this, they had seen the most intimate disciples of the Nazarene reformer differ widely on the fundamental principles of the Gospel and on the means of its propagation. Discord arose in the very ranks of the apostles charged to effect the spread and the triumph of the word of Christ. Those even who had received his most secret instructions from the mouth of the master himself no longer adhered to the injunctions of the son of Mary. To that teaching which proclaimed the enduring authority of the Jewish law, and which so forcibly urged on the twelve apostles the "obedience due to those seated in the chair of Moses"† had succeeded a revolutionary teaching, by which the whole law, every ordinance and every tradition were unreservedly abolished. And thus the single authority of one man sufficed to accomplish this formal rupture between the Christian sect and the ancient Synagogue;—a rupture devoid of all that was sacred, and based neither on divine authority nor on

* The Epistle of the Romans was written for this purpose.

† Matthew xxiii. 2 and the following.

any public revelation, and having no cause save the will, or rather the perspicacity of the new prophet.

Thus Paul, originally the disciple of the Pharisee Gamaliel, wholly and simply assumed the place of Jesus; Paulinism overran and choked primitive Christianity in the germ.

Yet more; the immediate disciples of the prophet of Galilee energetically resisted this revolutionary attempt of the evangeliser of the Gentiles. They opposed it in the name of him whose sole representatives and agents they were, and they compelled Paul to make a solemn recantation of his errors. What must the Jews have thought of these intestine quarrels, of the contest produced by this violent spirit of proselytism? What could it appear to them save that which they actually recognised it to be—an essentially human work, against which the dictates of their conscience and their religious faith equally caused them to protest, and in which they recognised nought save a system of clever propagandism, pursued by methods and artifices in which there was manifestly nothing of a supernatural or divine character.

Besides, the doctrine of Paul had a tendency to turn them aside ever more and more from the Gospel. In truth, what became in this system, of the prophecies so unanimously promising at the Messianic epoch, not only the absolute re-establishment of the throne and the law of Israel, but also the entire adhesion of all the peoples of the earth to the ordinances of the Mosaic code?

To permit the pagan converts to Christianity to reject all the practices of the law, was to give the Jews irrefutable proof that the Messiah had not come, and to create in them a conviction that the days foretold by the prophets had not come. Besides, the condition of

Judæa, instead of improving, became daily more disastrous. The hour of that final struggle approached, in which Jerusalem, the city of David was to fall beneath the swords of the uncircumcised. Who then, was this Christ who, sent to save Israel, left the nation more oppressed, more unhappy and more menaced than before? Who were these apostles, the pretended ministers of God the Saviour, who were powerless to break the yoke of the Romans and to deliver the sacred city?

Far from demonstrating to the Jews the divinity of the Gospel, all these circumstances excited in them the most violent opposition. Being also wholly engrossed by final and desperate efforts to defend their expiring nationality, they were unable to check the growing influence of the Christian doctrine, and remained ignorant of the successive triumphs of Paulinism, a designation much more appropriate than that of Christianity to the tenets of the new faith. The Jews held themselves entirely aloof, whilst struggling heroically against the invaders of their country and looking forward with unflinching hope to the advent of a deliverer.

FOURTH BOOK.

Paul and Peter at Rome.—Their preaching.—Their punishment.—Religion and the State.—A glance at the characteristics of the society in Rome.—Slavery.—Conquest.—Military rule.—Prætorians.—Prodigality of the public expenditure.—Popular games.—Private luxury.—The treasury.—Depopulation of towns.—Neglect of agriculture.—General distress.—Power of slaves and freedmen.—Religious and moral degradation.—School of Alexandria.—Means employed by the Apostles for the attainment of their object.—Secret societies.—Philosophical transactions.—Influence on domestic circles.

I.

IN accordance with the natural sequence of events and in the interests of its future course, Christianity soon diverged into the channels traced for it by Paul, and to the earliest stage of which course the apostles had offered so impolitic a resistance. In fact, it soon became manifest to the heads of the new Church that the disciple of Gamaliel had judged rightly in boldly rushing into the midst of pagan populations, without further troubling himself respecting the conversion of the Jews, and that he had adopted the wisest measures in seeking to attract the Gentiles by timely and appropriate concessions. The Jews were more inimical than ever to the Gospel doctrine as its natural consequences developed themselves, those consequences necessarily being the entire renunciation of the laws of Moses and of the most essential principles of the Sinaic revelation. The

apostles soon became convinced that their sect would never gain many adherents among the Hebrew people. Under these circumstances, had Christianity confined itself to Judea, it would at the fall of Jerusalem have probably expired noiselessly and without results, as did the other Jewish sects, such as those of the Essenes, with which it had much affinity, and the Sadducees, of which not a trace remained behind.

Besides, thanks to the indefatigable zeal of Paul, the apostles everywhere found churches organised, powerful associations established, and in the most important districts of the Roman Empire, strong bonds of union created which closely linked their new adherents. Thus they no longer hesitated. This first phase of Christianity offers a curious subject of study, for in it are displayed the means and the skilful combinations by which revolutions, social and religious, may be raised and developed.

Paul had been removed to Rome where, according to "the Acts of the Apostles," he regained his liberty and was allowed to preach his doctrine unopposed. A numerous colony of Jews had long been established in Rome. Paul undertook their conversion. Though, according to the Acts, he encountered well-nigh general incredulity among them, when he spoke to them of Jesus, of his Messianic character and divinity; yet it was not to be denied that he produced a deep impression on their minds. His influence on the Romans was far greater; for their curiosity had been previously excited concerning these Jews whose doctrine had begun to agitate the world. Paul's superior intelligence soon caused him clearly to perceive that the capital of the Roman world was the real goal to which all the forces of Christian proselytism should be directed.

Whoever possessed Rome would exercise universal sway ; the subjugation of Rome therefore, became thenceforth his single aim and his all-engrossing idea. He abandoned the other centres of his earlier apostolate, he no longer thought of visiting the Churches of Greece and Asia Minor. He took up his abode at Rome and on it concentrated all his efforts.

But it was unadvisable to betray, in the very centre of the Empire of the Cæsars, that any division existed among the chiefs, or in the teachings of the rising Church. It is to be surmised that Paul, by means of his secret correspondence with the other apostles, had made clear to them the grandeur and importance of the aim that he pursued ; and had at length won them over to his system. In fact, we learn that Peter, in his turn quitted Judea and hastened to Rome, there to unite unreservedly and unconditionally with the far-seeing apostle of the Gentiles. Peter was thus finally converted to the Paulian idea, of which the correctness became daily more manifest. We see in his Epistles that he no longer hesitates to recommend the doctrines of Paul to the acceptance of the faithful,* and, notwithstanding the obscure passages occurring in his letters, Paul, he declares, deserves to be respected equally with the apostles and the prophets.

And the two chiefs of the apostolate, henceforth united in thought and of one accord as to the course to be pursued, assailed ancient polytheism in the very

* St. Peter's Epistles, 2nd Epistle, iii. 15. The simultaneous presence of Peter and Paul at Rome is denied by historical criticism; but the Acts of the Apostles on Christian condition are explicit on this point; there is no just cause for its non-admission.

heart of the empire, in the certain persuasion that if they succeeded in obtaining the victory, the whole world would be in their power. At this crisis too, we see that the Christians of Judea abandoned Jerusalem, not only because, according to Eusebius's* account, they feared acts of retaliation in the heart of the city on the part of the Romans, but evidently also to achieve a final separation from the worshippers of the ancient law, of whose conversion they could no longer entertain a thought or a hope.

Thus Rome became the seat of the new doctrine, and probably also of a great number of those who had been exiled from Jerusalem. Peter and Paul undertook the evangelisation of the Romans on a vast scale, especially of the most influential and most exalted statesmen of the Empire. The Epistle of Paul to Titus informs us that eminent functionaries, such as Pudens, the senator, early figured among the converts. But this zealous proselytism was the signal for persecution. Nero, who reigned at that time, ordered the two apostles to be placed in irons. Accused of a design for the subversion of the Empire, they were condemned and crucified on Mount Janiculum, the site of the dwelling-place of the whole Jewish colony. Thus commenced the persecution of Christians and Jews alike, the latter not being at that fatal period distinguished from the former, either in Rome or Judea.†

* Eusebius History, iii. 3.

† The epistles of the Apostles abundantly prove that the early Christians were everywhere designated as Jews, an appellation which they claimed, and in which they gloried. On every occasion on which the Roman historians of the first century of the Church speak of them, they confound them with the Jews. In the "History of

It is here necessary to inquire into the motives which prompted the emperors and their agents to the exercise of such extreme severity against the disciples of Jesus.

II.

ANCIENT society was not based, as is that of the present day, on a division of Church and State, of the spiritual and temporal. In this age even, as we are well aware, the application of this principle is a problem very difficult of solution. The authority of Religion on the one hand, and of the power of the State on the other, are involved in an unremitting struggle for mutual encroachments, or in vain attempts to define the very boundary line between their respective departments.

In the Roman world such a distinction was wholly unknown. The State was Religion, and Religion was the State. Matters of religion and matters of policy were blended and merged into each other so entirely as to be wholly indivisible and indistinguishable. The Roman Pontiff was far more a political functionary, than a spiritual mediator between man and the gods. Religious worship was associated with every action of life, whether public or private. The Pontiff declared for peace or war, and decided as to the expediency of political enactments. He declared according to the

Claudius," by Suetonius, a curious passage exists on this subject. That author relates that the Emperor banished from Rome the Jews who were always creating disturbances under the influence of a certain "*Chrestus*," "*Judæos, impulsore Chrestus.*" This *Chrestus* evidently points to Jesus Christ, or rather to the Christian sect, to whose disciples Suetonius misapplies the general name of Jews.—Suetonius, "*The Twelve Cæsars; History of Claudius*," ch. xxv.

auguries, when it was right to act or to abstain from action, and to his sovereign voice every conscience submitted and before him every head was bowed. Thus Religion and the State were indissolubly united, or rather, they formed but a single institution. To blaspheme the gods was to attack public authority in its most august phase. Did not the Emperor himself, in fact, exercise important sacerdotal functions, as indicated by his title, "PONTIFEX MAXIMUS"? Did he not even occasionally lay claim to divinity? Any infringement of the religious system of antiquity shook the social edifice; according to the political notions of that time, the enemies of paganism were manifestly the enemies of the State.

Long before, Socrates had been pitilessly sacrificed in the midst of light and frivolous Athens, for having promulgated a doctrine opposed to the polytheistic creed of Greece. What must have been the condition of things in the Rome of the Cæsars, where the religious question was so intimately linked with the interests of the Empire?

The persecution of the Christians, if viewed from this point, is perfectly explicable. They were considered revolutionists, as they undoubtedly were, whose doctrines in attacking pagan theology at the same time threatened political society. They were condemned by the legal authorities, who were naturally alarmed at their predications and at the gradual spread of their secret associations. But pagan society no longer possessed the force necessary to resist the spiritualising influence of the Bible, transmuted into the Gospel. Of this a rapid glance at the Roman world of this period will offer us sufficient proof.

III.

SLAVERY was the wen on the face of ancient society. By its means it had existed, by it it was destined to perish. Slavery was the product of war, that war which was the sole source of power in the eyes of conquering Rome.*

Conquest and usurpation were the only means by which the Roman Empire had extended and gradually overrun all the then known world. By means of the courage of its numerous soldiery, the Rome of the Cæsars, while placing its yoke on the neck of all peoples, had gathered into its midst a countless multitude of vassals and slaves. Springing from an abuse of power, Rome could only maintain its authority by force. The principle, "*Væ victis*"—"Woe to the vanquished," was the moving pivot of the policy of the sovereign people. They subjected the prisoners taken in battle to the most cruel servitude. They placed the conquered towns and nations under the authority of petty tyrants and fierce proconsuls who, by their extortion, their violence and their savage despotism, outraged every sentiment of justice and humanity. Rome frequently found it necessary to have recourse to the most energetic measures,

* "*Such a nation of antiquity,*" says Michelet, "*may boast like the savages of America, of having swallowed up fifty peoples,*" (*"History of France,"* i. 95).

The reader's attention is directed to the interesting work of Mr. Moreau Christophe, "*On the Right to Immunity from Work in the Greek and Roman Republic,*" and to the statistics relating to the slaves inhabiting the Empire. In Rome, the number of the citizens was only half that of the slaves (Moreau Christophe, p. 152 and following).

in order to repress the outbursts of the nations quivering under her yoke, and to stifle their ever-recurrent attempts at rebellion. Servile wars again had several times placed Rome on the very brink of destruction.

In order to ward off these dangers and to check, if not wholly to appease these elements of disorder and anarchy, the Empire was obliged to place its sole reliance on a gigantic development of its military power. The army had become the basis and the essential condition of universal dominion. The authority of which the senate and people had been gradually divested had taken refuge in the camp. Thus, the legions having become aware that they were the sole support of the Empire and the sovereign masters of the situation, sold their allegiance and their co-operation at a high price. The "Prætorian Guards" soon became the masters of Rome, making and unmaking emperors, putting up the throne to auction, and dethroning on the morrow the Cæsars they had elected to-day. This military despotism, that is material force in its most barbaric phase, is always an indication of the decline of states. It was easy to perceive at this gloomy period, that the Empire was approaching its dissolution. The head was too feeble to guide the immense body, composed of heterogeneous members, which constituted the Roman world.

The excessive development of the military power necessarily caused a like inordinate increase in the public expenditure. Notwithstanding the tribute she exacted from the conquered nations, Rome was powerless to meet the requirements of her situation. Numerous standing armies, maintained at great expense at every corner of the Empire, absorbed an amount wholly disproportionate to the resources of the State ; while, on

the other hand, a shadow of popularity could be retained only by indulging the caprices of the populace, who, enervated and corrupted by imperial luxury, demanded bread and public games, as a compensation for the liberty denied them (*panem et circenses*).^{*} This distribution of rations and these public games involved an enormous squandered outlay. Millions were swallowed up in the combats of gladiators and wild beasts, to supply which the deserts of Asia and Africa were depopulated. Private luxury had at the same time attained to a degree of inconceivable refinement. Who has not heard of the Luculluses of Imperial Rome?† The dinners of the patricians of the Empire and of the epicureans of this depraved period, sometimes cost more than a million. The lampreys of the tanks were fed with the flesh of slaves, and no sacrifice was considered too great when its object was to procure and to have sent to Rome a single fish from the Black Sea. The products of the whole known world were daily gathered together on the tables of the Roman aristocracy, purchased by the spoils of all the conquered nations.

But in order to meet this lavish public and private expenditure, recourse was had to the most violent oppression and to the most disastrous expedients. The

^{*} In order to lessen the burden on the public treasury, the Emperors demanded subventions for the expenses of the games from those on whom they conferred the highest public dignities, and from those who received titles. The amount of this subvention rose, in the time of Claudius, to eighty millions of sesterces, nearly six millions of francs, (see Moreau Christophe, *loc. cit.*, Code Théodosien I. II. xv. 6 ; De spectaculis I. XIII. et LII. vi. 4, De prætoribus).

† Code Theodosian, book x. p. 31

“Clerk of the Treasury,” the necessary medium of all these excesses—the sole purveyor of these orgies, extended his power in proportion to the needs of the Empire. The insatiable avidity of these fiscal agents, who were themselves responsible for the collection of the imposts, soon became insupportable. In presence of these growing demands and of the greed of these tax-gatherers, the cities became depopulated and their inhabitants fled to the fields. The curials who in particular cases, sustained all the burden of the public charges, vainly endeavoured to evade by flight the melancholy honours of their office. Besides, whither could they fly, in order to escape the tyranny of a power whose sway extended over the entire world? The fields offered no refuge from exactions, under the burdens of which the inhabitants of the towns had succumbed.* The pitiless *fisc* did not abandon his prey so easily.

Misery and dejection made fearful progress under the influence of these combined causes. The people, wrapping themselves in their garment of slavery, crouched in terror and despair on the earth. As a beast of burden lies down under repeated blows and refuses to rise again, so nothing could induce them to resume the cultivation of the soil. Vainly did the emperors endeavour, by holding out promises of redemption and reward, to re-people the deserted plains. Nothing checked the

* Sometimes an effort was made to alleviate by legal enactment the condition of the settler, and then the proprietor complained of his inability to pay the taxes. At another time the law sacrificed the settler to the proprietor and plunged him into slavery, (Michelet, “History of France,” t. i. p. 104). Constant in Cod. Justiniani, lib. xi. tit. 49; Cod. Justiniani, lib. xlvii. tit. 51.

increase of the evil, the desert daily extended and the desolation became ever more intense.

Another fact is no less worthy of being cited : this violent, oppressive and tyrannical society was nevertheless dependent on the slaves whom it subjected to its yoke. The Romans, like all other aristocratic and conquering races, looked upon all the details of domestic life and upon all questions of material economy with profound contempt. All matters of trade and commerce were committed by them to their slaves. The Roman citizen, owing his aggrandisement to war and to the power of eloquence, considered as unworthy of him everything save arms, horses, bodily exercises, liberal professions, the life of the Forum and the ordering of public affairs.* The slaves were the bankers, speculators and exercisers of industry of all kinds ; they thus accumulated savings which enabled them one day, if they understood to win for themselves the favour of their masters, to secure their manumission. This class of emancipated slaves who were governed by a specific legislation, formed an important body in the state, and one which gradually acquired great influence with the Government.† It was rare for the first ministers and the intimate favourites of the emperors to be other than powerful freedmen, who directed the imperial policy as they willed. In fact, these slaves who furnished so

* See Moreau Christophe, "To the Right of Immunity from Work and of the Organisation of Servile Labour in the Grecian and Roman Republics," p. 23 and the following.

† Tacitus declares in his *Annals* (book xiii pp. 26 and 27) that at that epoch was composed almost wholly of these freedmen. (See in the "Digest," book xxxviii. tit. 1, the laws which regulated the condition of these freedmen in Rome.)

many remarkable men and eminent writers in the age of the Cæsars, were particularly characterised by intelligence and aptness of intellect.

Thus the race of slaves virtually governed the Roman world, for in their hands was centred all the economical action of the state; they raised themselves to power, whether concealed or avowed, at the side of the emperors which associated them with all the affairs of the Empire. In fine, they displayed intellectual qualities of a far higher order than did the Romans at the time of their decline.

And at the same moment when all these causes of decay and anarchy pervaded Roman society, hoarse murmurs were already heard in the distance, proceeding from the gloomy forests of Germany: the threatening voice of the savage peoples who were preparing with confused agitation to pour down, like a living avalanche, on the Empire of the Cæsars.

Thus was Imperial Rome slowly sinking beneath the action of an incurable evil. Slavery, the arrogance and despotism of armed legions, the development of lawless luxury, the corruption of morals, the rapacity of the *fisc*, the misery of the people, the insufficiency of agricultural products, the hatred of the vanquished nations, the struggles of half-subdued lands, and at a distance, the threatened invasion of the peoples of the North, formed the elements of the coming ruin.

The ancient empire was crumbling visibly into dust, and the breaking forth of a violent social revolution was inevitable and imminent throughout the world.

In all that concerned religion and morals, a like terrible confusion prevailed. A portentous voice had been heard exclaiming, "The pagan gods approach

their doom!" In truth, all the ancient forms of belief were gradually yielding to the insidious influence of a sceptical and satirical philosophy since the then already remote period at which the great orator of the Republic, Cicero ridiculed the priests and augurs and expressed his surprise that they could look upon each other without laughing. In how much bitter sarcasm, in how many violent attacks had not the satirical writers of Rome indulged on that whole system of sensual and artistic mythology which had secured the homage of all mortals throughout a period of 4000 years!

Greece which, notwithstanding the political supremacy of Rome, had retained the direction of all intellectual progress, had in its turn undergone a radical change in respect of its philosophical teachings; the minds of its great thinkers had long been engrossed in the anxious search for the "Unknown God"; for Greece had bestowed her most illustrious philosophers on the Alexandrian school, especially Aristotle and Plato, the latter, it is true, under a highly spiritualised form.

In consequence of the powerful impulse which the Alexandrian school had imparted to the public mind, to it were attracted all the attention and all the intellectual power of the ancient world. Being linked by its admiration of the theories of Plato to the Hellenic philosophy, it had originated a spiritualistic doctrine, of which the origin and the descent has been sufficiently indicated by its appellation—"Neo-platonism." The habitual intercourse between the sages of Alexandria with Judea and the East had gradually introduced into the Alexandrian philosophy the mystic ideas pertaining

to several oriental sects, combined with the Monotheistic principles of Judea. Thus, on the neutral ground of the great Egyptian city, a certain approximation had been effected between the Unitarian and Polytheistic systems of belief, and the School of Alexandria had finally detached itself from mythological idolatry, in order to become more closely connected with loftier doctrines. The end and aim of Alexandrian philosophers was a vast eclecticism, tending to identify and to fuse in one and the same formula, all the good points of the several systems. Above all, it sought while thus placed between the East and the West, to reconcile the wisdom of Greece with that of the East. But this very Grecian wisdom, being then subjected to the irresistible influence of combinations of ideas often the precursors, and subsequently the causes of great moral revolutions, was actually at that moment passing away with the religions and the institutions of antiquity; while there came forth from the East and principally from Judea, a new spirit, a whole world of ideas and doctrines, destined powerfully to influence the philosophy of the Neo-platonists.

From the East was conveyed to Alexandria the idea of the Divine Unity, set forth with so much lucidity by Philo; but from the East, Alexandria also received combined with the traditions of Gnostics and the Cabala, an insuperable tendency to mysticism.* Although imbued with Jewish ideas amalgamated with the mystic notions borrowed by the Hebrews from the Babylonians, the Alexandrian school did not wholly break with the philosophical theories of Plato. It

* See in the general history of philosophy by Cousin, his remarks, p. 161.

retained the Trinitarian doctrine of the Divine attributes of the great Greek philosopher, but being at the same time powerfully impressed with the Jewish principles, it admitted the Unity of God in its most abstract signification. This God nevertheless has three conditions, and one might say, "He is God absolutely; God as intelligence; God as power."

Man should seek to resemble God; how can he resemble Him better than by raising himself and merging himself into Him? Is this unification possible? Yes; replied the Alexandrians, the soul may also attain to a condition which shall place it in direct communication with the Divine Unity; this condition is that of extasy, in which the spirit succeeds in separating itself from its corporeal dwelling, and lives for a moment an existence wholly immaterial and celestial.

Alexandrian mysticism was soon transformed into theurgy. There is but one step from ecstasy to miracle; the mystics of Neo-platonism rapidly degenerated into the claimants to miraculous and supernatural Spiritualism, and its follies were in existence at Alexandria. Neo-platonists were not only philosophers but magicians and hierophants: they evoked demons, cured human infirmities, worked miracles, and disseminated the strangest superstitions among the mass.

We perceive, and we shall presently examine, the numerous points of contact that existed between the Alexandrian school and Christianity. In it more was involved than a new philosophy; it included an entirely new system of religious tenets on which Judaism had stamped its indelible mark, and by which Christianity was destined to profit. These new doctrines inflicted mortal wounds on the existing religion of the world, and

the rising waters of scepticism daily overflowed the altars of the Olympian gods.

Spiritualism meanwhile, on the other hand, acquired more and more dominion over the world of morals. Mankind was weary of the materialism of the pagan worship. These gods formed of dust and flesh, these divinities, preys to stormy passions and to all human infirmities, and receiving wounds which needed a physician for their cure, began to be regarded with contempt and disdain. Excess of sensualism, in accordance with the reaction natural to the human mind, ending in disgust, restored all souls to a love and respect for spiritualistic ideas.

We have here hastily sketched a picture of Roman society ; it is thence manifest how wholly it was prepared for the work which rising Christianity sought to accomplish, and how easy was the transformation of a society so disorganised and enfeebled in all its elements, if that transformation was committed to skilful hands.

IV.

When we remember that the first disciple of Jesus who arrived at Rome was Paul, that intelligent apostle who had so well comprehended the true conditions of the dissemination of Christianity among the Gentiles ; Paul, the great polemical diplomatist of the new Church, we are no longer surprised at the rapid spread of the Gospel in the empire of the Cæsars.

The apostle of the Gentiles had no hesitation in first addressing the slaves :*—"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God

* Epistle to the Romans, vi. ; Epistle to the Galatians, iii. and v.

through Christ. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye all are one in Christ Jesus."

This fearless and novel language, these great principles of liberty and equality were well calculated to excite and inflame the minds of the slaves, and to fill them with intoxicating pride, hope, and joy.

The new faith thus promised not only universal emancipation, but reproducing the ancient theory of the Gracchi, it suggested an expectation of a vast system of community of possession, according to which all the goods of this world were to be equally divided among those who entered the bosom of the church.*

Finally, the Gospel said to all the lowly and all the oppressed, "Those who were the first shall be the last, and he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."† It is superfluous to enlarge on the tact displayed in these professions of faith; they must have been cordially welcomed by all the slaves of imperial Rome. The emperors were not deceived as to their importance, as to the influence which they exercised on the fate of the empire. They therefore pursued the ardent preachers with extreme rigour who, under the garb of a new religion, were manifestly inducing a servile war of a much more formidable character than that of which Spartacus had been the moving spirit, at the time of the republic.

* Acts of the Apostles, iv. 32.

† Matthew, xx. 25 and following; xxiii. 11 and following.

Persecution imparted fresh vigour to the rising sect, and the very presence of danger seemed to exercise an increasing fascination on the neophytes. The persecuted Christians instituted in Rome itself that system of secret societies which has formed in all ages the revolutionist's most efficacious mode of action.

These mysterious meetings, held in the night in the catacombs and so often interrupted and stained with blood by the soldiers and agents of the Roman police, were virtually assemblies of conspirators, excited to frenzy by religious fanaticism, swearing by a new symbol to annihilate tyranny, and resolved at the cost of life, to destroy ancient society and replace it by a body-politic founded on the principle of universal equality and liberty, with the Gospel for its code, and Christ for its master.

In all ages persevering action on the part of these secret societies has issued in the attainment of their ends. At that period of general decline and depravity, their success was yet more assured.

V.

At the same time that the founders of Christianity acted thus on the social condition of the state, they exercised a like influence in the domain of philosophy. With the same perspicacity which caused them to recognise Rome as the pivot and centre of political society, and that to conquer Rome was to subjugate the universe, did they likewise perceive that to triumph at Alexandria was to subjugate the world of intellect. We have above stated the already numerous points in which the Alexandrian philosophy assimilated with the doctrines of

Christianity the doctrines of chances of the Platonists of the second Academy, the Pyrrhonism, the Empiricism, and the Atheism of several political, religious, and moral doctrines, as to the progress of civilisation and the corruption of manners. A strong tendency was evinced by Alexandrian philosophy to Eclecticism, probably arising either from reason or alarm. A disciple of Philo, Antiochus was the first to attempt this compromise, in reference to the doctrines of Xeno, Plato, and Aristotle. Potamo of Alexandria followed in the same path. Ammonius Saccas went still further, and by combining Christianity with the doctrines of the East and of Greece, he evolved a system of Gnostics having many points of resemblance with the Bible and the Gospel.

There was but a step to be made on each side, in order to attain to a perfect agreement and assimilation : the purely ideal trinity of Plato and the neo-platonist, was the ground on which the representatives of the ancient school and the adepts of the new faith met and joined hands.

Mystic philosophy easily recognised the platonic hypostasis in the triple figure of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, though indivisible in the Divine Unity. The incarnation of an Eternal and Infinite Being in a human form, the tradition which set forth that he had lived a shorter or longer period on earth presented certainly a marked difference: this concession was demanded by the requirements of the times, and the utility of the compromise was so evident that the principle was admitted without hesitation. In this was involved a final rupture with the monotheism of the Hebrews ; but this innovation was so opportune that we may justly consider it to have been one of the causes of the triumph of Christianity.

Finally, there was another, and that the most noble and most important circumstance by which Christianity exercised dominion over ancient society. Its very first efforts were directed against the moral depravity and corruption of all classes of society. Christianity spoke in the name of public and private morality, in the cause of human dignity and of the sanctity of the domestic hearth, in that of violated chastity and of virtue daringly outraged, in the name of the eternal laws revealed by God, Who sooner or later chastises triumphant vice.

The moment was favourable for the utterance of these stern predictions. The Sybarites of the Roman world, after having plucked the rose of every desire, after having drained the cup of sensual pleasure to the dregs, became the victims of satiety and of an intense weariness produced by their inability to invent new enjoyments; and young girls, despised by the profligates of imperial Rome, covered their heads with the veil of sadness and uttered a protest against the horrors of this century of infamy.

There then, the apostles of Christianity sought and found amid these various victims of materialism and iniquity, amid these sorrows of the domestic hearth, their most powerful support. When with the Bible and Gospel in their hands, they preached the sanctity of the marriage tie, respect for parents, purity of morals, all the women of the Roman city ranged themselves under their banner. By the aid of the women they gradually came to exercise an irresistible influence in the family circle. By their aid too, were gained over husbands and sons, previously unconsciously influenced by the example of their mothers, wives, and sisters.

And while this effect was daily and hourly in operation in all houses, the enfranchised slaves were on their

part acting on the minds of the emperors who, alarmed at the progress of the new sect and dismayed at the depopulation of towns and fields, had recourse, but too late, to measures all governments adopt in their decline in order to retain the power which was slipping from their hand.

They uttered those words of liberty, equality, duty, and moral and political reform, which had been such visible instruments of success when pronounced by the lips of the persecuted adherents of the rising Church.*

They became converts to Christianity, in order to secure the adherence of a people which had risen in its despair, invoking the death of the empire and calling loudly on the barbarians for aid.† It is superfluous to seek for supernatural reasons to explain the triumph of Christianity in the empire of the Cæsars. The causes that we have just analysed are sufficiently evident and explain that singular concatenation of political and moral events, of which Christianity skilfully availed itself to invade and to conquer the Roman world, and by which, thanks to its triumph in the very centre of the empire, it became CATHOLICISM, that is to say universal authority.

* See on this point Constant., Code Theod., book i. tit. 7, law 1st. Gratian and Honorius organised public assemblies for the purpose of discussing popular interests (laws of 382 *Sive integra*, and of 418 *Cod. Theod.*, book xii. tit. 12).

† Mamertin, "In panegyri. Juliani." Salvien, *De Providentiâ*, v.

FIFTH BOOK.

The Works of God and works of man.—Slow progress of Christianity.—Schisms and heresies.—No heresies among the Jews.—Analysis of the principal heresies arising during the first three centuries.—Council of Nice.—Final establishment of Roman Catholicism.—General outline of the Catholic Church since that period.—View necessarily taken thereof by the Jews.

I.

WE do not pretend to give here a history of Christianity and its successive development, but it appears to us that it would be interesting to enquire by what concurrence of events the separation of the first Christians from Judaism was induced; further, by what skilful means they prepared and succeeded in, their design of universal dominion.

This aim was steadily pursued during several centuries, amid every kind of danger, and horrible persecutions. The chiefs of the new religion required dauntless courage and indomitable perseverance, in order to hold aloft the banner of their faith. More than three centuries elapsed before Christianity succeeded in seizing the sceptre, and in seating itself on the throne at the right hand of the emperors. We leave to others the investigation of the miraculous element in this slow and laborious formation of a new society. We recognise in it naught save the logical and natural results of human events.

The same characteristics have marked all great revolutionary epochs.'

More than three centuries have now elapsed since the voice of Luther evoked an important reform in the sphere of religion. Again, nearly eighty years since, France gave the signal to the world of a new political era and of a new civilisation. Yet neither of these all-important events has as yet attained to its complete development. Such is the course of social facts ; thus slowly advance the conquests of human intelligence ; it is the essential character of the works of man to meet with obstacles, and to attain their end only after a long period of difficulty and labour.

Whatever may be the opinion which should be formed of the character of its founder, it is yet evident that early Christianity obeyed, in its development, this supreme law of humanity. The first propagators, the Apostles availed themselves with remarkable intelligence of all favourable circumstances ; they were powerfully seconded by the general social condition of their time ; their efforts were guided by a practical common sense that we cannot too much admire ; and notwithstanding all these propitious elements, it was necessary to reach the age of Constantine—that is to say, the year 300 of the new era—ere the object proposed by St. Paul the true founder of Christianity, was attained. But it did not suffice to conquer ; the important point was that it should hold its ground. Thus the Christian Church had not only to contend with the political society by which it was surrounded and which it aspired to rule, but it had also to defend itself from the internecine dissensions which every moment imperilled its fundamental principle. In fact, Christianity had scarcely propounded

to the moral world the unfathomable doctrine of the Man-God, ere the anarchy of schisms and heresies arose in its midst.

Judaism had never presented the spectacle of those violent struggles of dogmatic principles, which have so often marked and disturbed the Christian Church, and stained its altars with blood. The very simplicity of the Jewish faith rendered similar contests impossible. The only alternative was Atheism, or a belief in the Unity of God, the basis of the law of Israel. Thus no really schismatic and opposing sect existed among the Jewish people. The Samaritans preferred their mountain to that of Zion. The Sadducees did not believe in the immortality of the soul, while on the contrary, the Pharisees unanimously professed full faith in a future existence. The Essenes devoted themselves to a contemplative life, and practised the greatest purity of morals with exemplary fidelity. But the Decalogue and the Bible continued to be the common belief of all these moral associations of Judaism. All alike proclaimed the Unity and Indivisibility of the Eternal God; not a single heretical principle obtained among them.

It was not the same in Christianity. The complicated and incomprehensible nature of its Trinitarian doctrine, its numerous compromises with Paganism soon caused various warring sects to arise around it, which endangered the very basis on which it rested.

II.

The most violent and formidable opposition offered to Christianity proceeded from the Jews who imputed to it, not without reason, misrepresentation of the words

of the Bible and of the Prophets, in order to deduce therefrom ideas, promises, and conclusions which they did not contain, in support of the new dogma and the new God. We may easily understand the force of the objections raised to the Christians by the Jews who had remained faithful to the ancient law, if we peruse the controversial treatise written by St. Justin towards the close of the second century, under the title—"Dialogue with Tryphon." This Tryphon, according to the text, was a Jew who had taken up his abode in Greece and was strongly imbued with Hellenic philosophy. But it is rather an ideal type of the Judaism of that time and an echo of its arguments against Christianity.

The observations of Tryphon are weighty ; he denies the divinity and messianic character of Jesus Christ, and what is very remarkable, he even calls in question his existence and his appearance here below. "Whether he was born and where he dwelt," says he, "is entirely unknown." St. Justin, on his part, discusses with warmth ; he affirms that the ancient law was given for Judea alone, and that it was thenceforth abolished ; he assumes especially (and that assumption is the starting-point of a system of reasoning by which Christianity radically altered the signification of the Scriptures), that the Old Testament should be understood only figuratively, and that the literal text conceals a wholly spiritual and symbolical meaning. However this may be, the zeal which St. Justin displays in this controversy reveals all the danger which the rising Church incurred from the attitude which the Jews had assumed. And simultaneously with this struggle between the synagogue and Christianity, what dangerous sects arose !

Innumerable were the heresies in the first century of

the Church. These had their origin chiefly in the protests of reason against the mysteries which Christianity introduced to the world. The new theories as to the nature of God, infinite yet indwelling a finite form—as to the trinity, at one and the same time, one and many ; on the Consubstantiality of the Father and the Son ; on the Eucharist or the real presence of Jesus Christ in the two elements of bread and wine, gave rise to the most serious objections in the domain of philosophy. Heresies also resulted from the conflict of the old spirit with the new, from the natural and inevitable mixture of pagan ideas with Christian principle, which formed a difficult combination. Again, these heresies derived support from the opposition of the Jews who, interpreting the Scriptures in a different sense and preserving the Hebrew tradition in all its purity, furnished terrible weapons to the heretics for their attacks on Christianity. Finally, above all these elements of conflict and schism, rose the love of the supernatural and the fascinations it exercised ; a crowd of adherents rallied round every new and clever impostor who, taking advantage of public credulity, pretended to be endowed with miraculous power, and thenceforth presented himself as a messenger and an exponent of the will of the Most High.

The Ebionites were the first sectarians who in the earliest days of Christianity, denied the divine origin of Jesus, declared themselves disciples of St. Peter, in opposition to the followers of St. Paul, and upheld the necessity of strict adherence to the observances prescribed by the Hebrew law.

Another sect, the Cerinthians, believed in a sort of incarnation of the spirit of Christ in the shape of a man named Jesus.

Two famous heresiarchs, ^{*}Saturnius and Basilidus taught that the God of the Jews was only an inferior order of angel, who desiring to subjugate all nations, had awakened the resistance of all princes, which continued until the time when the sovereign God had sent his first-born *Noûs* to deliver the human race from the power of the inferior angels. This *Noûs* had been denominated Jesus while on the earth; it was not he who was crucified by the Jews, but Simon whom he had invested with his form in order to deceive his executioner. Hence the inference, that neither confession, nor the adoration of the crucified was to be practised. Basilidus believed in the metempsychosis, and that far from subduing his passions, man should yield himself to them without reserve.

The Gnostics, while submitting to Jesus Christ, saw in him only a man born like all others, distinguished solely by his virtue. They proclaimed that to reach unto God they must do all the works in the world, and in their orgies indulged in the most horrible excesses.

The Valentinians, whose tenets were an incoherent mixture of those of the Gnostics and Saturnians, had formed a whole extravagant theogony, of shreds borrowed from Plato and the Christian mystics.

The Sethians believed that Jesus was only Seth resuscitated.

The Cainites took Cain, Korah and Abiram for their gods.

The Ophites affirmed that wisdom had transformed itself into a serpent, and worshipped Jesus Christ under the form of a reptile.

We must mention besides, Marcion, who admitted two powerful principles, that of good and that of evil—who

recognised in Jesus the saviour of the pagans, but not the Messiah promised by the God of the Jews. Montanus, who declared himself on his own authority a prophet, a thaumaturgus and Messiah, excited in his turn so formidable a heresy, that the intervention of several bishops became necessary, to check the infatuation of the faithful, misled by the prophecies of the pretended seer.

Tatian, who notwithstanding his preaching in support of Christianity, denied that Jesus was directly and lineally descended from David.

With these conflicts of dogmatic principles were combined conflicts of personal ambition. Clever impostors, as we have already stated, succeeded in passing themselves off as prophets and workers of miracles. Ambitious priests, such as Novatian and Fortunatus, aspiring to the highest ecclesiastical power, raised opposing altars. At this period the heresy of Paul of Samosatus violently agitated the whole of the Christian Church; it maintained that Jesus Christ's birth was human, that he derived the beginning of his existence from Mary, but that he was transformed from a man into God. Paul of Samosatus was Bishop of Antioch, and this is enough to indicate how great was the scepticism which had penetrated into the highest ranks of the priests.

The object of the two councils of Antioch was to eradicate this heresy.

As time advanced, the doctrines opposed to the Church increased in extent and importance. First we have Manicheism, which recognising two contrary principles in the government of the world, subverted the systems of the Old and New Testaments; while its founder, Manes, accompanied by his twelve disciples

declared himself the chief of the twelve apostles, and well-nigh succeeded in being accepted as a new Christ.

Ere long Arianism arose, and its name and influence have not disappeared even up to this time. The doctrine of Arius, its founder, an Alexandrian priest, may be summed up in this, the absolute denial of the divinity of Christ and of the possibility of there being Unity in the Trinity, or that the Son, being an emanation from the Father, could have the same divine and eternal nature as God.

He thus attacked the very foundation of Christianity, he annulled the compromise made with paganism, and with the exception of some details which did not affect any essential principle, returned to the unitarian doctrine of Judaism.

The Church was conscious that if this heresy, which spread rapidly and widely, eventually triumphed, its ruin was inevitable. It opposed the Arians with extreme violence, as it felt secure of the support of Constantine ; and the Emperor, by his conversion, speedily placed the spiritual sceptre of the Roman world in the hands of Christianity. For the first time, the Church convoked an Œcumenical Council (that is a universal council, composed of representatives of all the churches), to whom it deputed solemnly to judge and condemn this Arian heresy. This famous council was held at Nice A.D. 325.

The important results of this Council are well known ; it definitively fixed the doctrines of the Church and created Catholicism in the form it has retained till the present day. It was held publicly, in the presence of the Emperor Constantine, who, after having issued a decree granting liberty of conscience throughout the Empire, had himself called forth this solemn manifestation of Christian doctrine. The Council of Nice

drew up the famous articles of creed professed by the Church under the name of "Credo," which is its principal "Act of faith." By it the divinity and consubstantiation of Jesus Christ were irrevocably established. Yet the Trinity was but partially consecrated in this important assemblage. "We also believe in the Holy Ghost," simply declared the editors of the Nicean Creed, without adding that he was God equally with the Father and Son, and that he was combined with the other two elements of the Trinity, though forming a distinct person. This creed was however, not unanimously accepted by the members of the Council. Seventeen bishops refused to subscribe to it, a circumstance which proves how powerful was the influence exercised by the Arian party, and how greatly the Church was divided as to its fundamental dogma.

III.

CATHOLICISM was established at this epoch and definitively superseded primitive Christianity. The dominion of the Church became universal. Based on the political power of the emperors who placed their gigantic authority at its disposal, and who had enforced the fulfilment of its decrees by measures of state, it completely subdued the Roman world. Its bishops in Council assembled, ruled in their turn all spiritual matters, to the very limits of the empire, and thus constituted a Catholic unity which pervaded all nations of the earth.

Ancient society did not however, submit without fresh struggles. A violent reaction supervened, which for a long period, endangered the future and the existence of

the Church. The Emperors frequently hesitated before bowing their necks to the yoke of the law of Christ. A few days sufficed to Julian the Apostate for the annihilation of the work originated by Constantine, and he subjected the dismayed Christians to new persecutions and martyrdom. Notwithstanding these obstinate contests between the ancient and the new world, the victory was no longer doubtful and Catholicism soon extended its authority over all the peoples whom the Cæsars had enslaved.

But varying sects, schisms and heresies continued to rend the bosom of the Church. Arianism, that energetic protest against the divinity of Christ, remained in force, despite the condemnation of Arius. Pelagius and Nestorius consecutively opposed the Catholic doctrine. The efforts of numerous free-thinkers were also directed against the Church and especially against its infallibility, while the Jews in their dispersions throughout the empire, amid the clanking of their chains, remained as a living and inflexible negation of the truth of Christianity.

The Church, in presence of these opponents who later were to be followed by John Huss, Luther and Calvin, by whom Catholic unity was eventually to be destroyed, wielded the same weapons as Paganism had directed against herself. She had recourse to force in support of her cause ; she allied herself with the Cæsars and invoked their power and their legions to annihilate her enemies ; she condemned and persecuted those who dared to offer resistance ; in one word, she employed the same means for her own defence, which are used by every human power. Instead of seeking to teach and to convince by the light of the spirit, she enslaved body

and mind and enforced her own acceptance by violence. These were, we must admit, the necessary conditions of her preservation. The Church having declared herself to be eternal truth, was compelled to crush all errors and all resistance. But in this very necessity is not mere human power attired in the sacred garb of religion, the agent in this struggle against the liberty of the individual?—is not a crisis far more political than divine clearly to be seen?

Were indeed these long centuries of strife indispensable to the All-powerful God, who with one word called forth creation out of nothing, and light out of darkness? We recognise the influence, action and aim, the slow and skilful efforts of human diplomacy in conflict with material obstacles, in this struggle of opposing interests. We meet nowhere therein with those sudden and irresistible manifestations, by which the God of the Universe reveals His immutable truth to the sons of mortality.

However this may be, the Church was gradually led to concentrate more and more all the power which she could wield, in order more forcibly to resist the attacks which imperilled her existence. The very powerful centralisation of the Roman Empire served as her model and her support. The government of the Church was at first vested in various agents, and allowing freedom of action to the several Churches, was then transferred to local or Œcumenical Councils, and became ere long essentially monarchical and absolute. Towards the close of the sixth century the Papacy was definitively constituted and assumed its comprehensive sovereignty, its dogmatic infallibility and its exclusive sway over all the clergy of the Universe.

In this transformation was involved the last phase of the religion of Christ. It had existed six hundred years amidst difficulties and dangers of all kinds, and this long period had been necessary to enable it to work out its ultimate formula and to establish its power on the ruins of Roman society.

IV.

WHERE then can we discover, amid the various incidents attending the progress of Christianity, the providential event of sufficient significance to enlighten the minds of the Jewish people, and to inspire them with an unquestioning faith in the Christian Church and its founder; since the progressive development of the Christian idea, while aiming at the conquest of the universe, was aided by the ingenious contrivances of Paulinism, by the natural dissolution of paganism, by the support of the emperors, and by the vigorous and autocratic organisation of Catholicism?

The Jews, it is true, had perceived that great skill had been exercised in support of a cause which was also wonderfully promoted by outward and existing circumstances; but in the events which consecutively occurred in the world they sought in vain for a direct display of divine intervention. They saw the leaders of the Christian movement exercise marvellous ability in profiting by every occurrence which favoured the success of their work. They saw them make a compromise with philosophy in the element of the Trinitarian unity; with polytheism, in the matter of the incarnation of the Son of God; finally, they saw them concentrate all their energy on Rome, the centre of the political universe,

and on Alexandria, the centre of the intellectual world, since their triumph in these two towns would manifestly ensure to them universal dominion.

But they perceived at the same time that three hundred years of persecution, of martyrdom and of desperate conflicts had been necessary, notwithstanding these manifestly propitious circumstances, to enable the Church to possess itself of the sceptre of the Roman world by means of the conversion of an emperor. Did not this long struggle, marked by so many vicissitudes and so much suffering, offer an additional proof that the means Christianity had employed in her cause were wholly political, wholly human.

And what did the Jews observe further? They observed the new faith persecuted, not only by public authority, whose existence it menaced, but also attacked and combated with extreme violence by its own adherents. They saw an internecine war of heresies and schisms break forth and divide the Church while the Cæsars sacrificed to the cruel curiosity of the people, in the sanguinary games of the circus, hecatombs of Christians, beneath the blades of gladiators and the teeth of wild beasts.

Not until the age of Constantine did the Church, armed with an imperial decree which proclaimed the Christian religion established throughout the extent of the empire, invested with the right of calling together Œcumenical Councils, and endowed with authority over all the religious communities of the known world, assume the power and the title of CATHOLIC, that is to say, UNIVERSAL.

But while we see this victorious Church issue from the catacombs to reign over all peoples, we also see it

subjected to the human accidents of all contested authority. It exerts the power thus laboriously attained, to subdue its adversaries and to overthrow its antagonists ; in its turn it became intolerant and oppressive ; it declared that "all those who are not for us are against us ;" it overwhelmed by force, and if need be drowned in blood those heresies which, in its days of humiliation, it had opposed by persuasion and free discussion alone ; it kindled the stake ; it armed legions to avenge its quarrel ; it organised the fearful and mysterious tribunal of the Inquisition and dived to the very depths of conscience, in order to scrutinise the orthodoxy of human thought ; it invested the Head of the Church, the heir of St. Peter, the servant of the servitors of God, with unlimited power, with absolute infallibility ; not satisfied with creating him Sovereign Pontiff of the universe, it anointed him king, and bestowed a temporal crown on the vicar of that Christ, who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." It ruled sovereigns, and prescribed to them their politics and their laws ; it employed their arm to exterminate those who disturbed and disquieted it—the Albigenes, the Hussites, the Protestants, the Calvinists ; it evoked St. Bartholomew's Eve by the mouth of St. Dominic, encouraging the soldiers to massacre, exclaiming, "Kill all, God will know how to distinguish His own." In a word, it followed the inevitable downward course of all unrestrained Governments, in tolerating no will, no idea, no principle which they consider opposed to their principles and their acts, and who deem themselves lost if they are discussed or controlled.

While thus rapidly stating these facts, we desire not to maintain that they are devoid of all legitimate ex-

cuse. Far from this, the Church attacked, threatened repeatedly by fresh adversaries, its vital principles endangered, yielded to a powerful and natural instinct of self-preservation, while seeking in self-defence all the means it possessed for the subjugation of its numerous enemies. No human authority can, we think, be justly reproached for protecting itself, and for defending, even by force of arms, the system on which it is based. Only we ask permission to see in the accessories, in the violence and in the vicissitudes of such a struggle, a course of events essentially human, and in no way providential.

We perfectly comprehend that men, when excited by the violence of their passions and by feelings of self-interest, should indulge in these merciless conflicts ; but we will never allow ourselves to associate the name of the God of justice and goodness with deeds of oppression, vengeance, and blood.

SIXTH BOOK.

Last objection.—The Jews universally punished, in consequence of the condemnation of Jesus.—Justice and mercy of God.—Judges and contemporaries of Jesus Christ were not punished.—Political and religious causes of the persecution of the Jews, and of the hatred of which they have been the victims.—Their material and moral position in relation to the Roman Empire.—Their position in relation to Christian society.—Results.

I.

ONE, and a final objection, remains to be investigated.

We are thus addressed:—

“Are not the misfortunes of the Jewish people, their dispersion among all nations, the contempt with which they are everywhere regarded, the reproach which universally attends them, so many manifestations of the anger of an offended Deity? The Jewish people, like Cain, the murderer of Abel, bear the avenging mark on their brow; after eighteen centuries, the responsibility still rests upon them of having unjustly shed the blood of Christ. This secular expiation is the visible punishment of the Deicide which they committed. Everywhere popular clamour points to them, accuses and persecutes them. In this solemn manifestation of outraged conscience, “*VOX POPULI*” is truly “*VOX DEI*.” What idea do those give us who speak thus, of Divine goodness and mercy? Does the Bible thus portray to us our Heavenly Father ever ready to pardon the guilty, abundant in mercy and compassion

to the unfaithful. Unjust writers have accused the God of the Hebrews of being a cruel master and terrible in His acts of vengeance. Where then are these fearful instances to be found in the Scriptures, even at the moment of the outraged Lord's most awful anger? The crimes, the revolts, and the backslidings of Israel were numerous, but God never showed Himself merciless. A prayer from Moses or the prophets, His love for His creatures and the chosen people soon disarmed and appeased his severity, and caused mercy to replace justice. Such is the sublime and paternal aspect under which the God of the Hebrews reveals Himself in the inspired books. "And the Lord passed before him proclaiming, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth."*

But to maintain and believe that the God who so repeatedly declared to Moses himself that the children shall not be punished for the sins of the fathers, the soul that sinneth shall be punished for its own sin alone, could cause the most distant posterity to expiate the faults of their ancestors; to impute such severity to the ever-merciful God, is this not to insult alike Divine Providence, reason, and truth?

Eighteen centuries have elapsed since the Romans, on the appeal of the guardians of Israel's law, condemned the Apostle who, in a remote corner of Judea, was the promulgator of a new religious and political doctrine. Let us admit that both Romans and Jews were mistaken, and that they were incapable of either seeing or understanding that they were persecuting not only a social reformer but a god; let us admit that they volun-

* Exodus xxxiv. 6.

tarily closed their eyes to the light and acted wickedly against him, yet could he with one act of his omnipotence, have counteracted their schemes and rendered void their designs.

A singular fact is this! The actors in this drama were themselves not punished! The generation who condemned and executed Jesus were visited by no chastisement. The magistrates of the Sanhedrim, the sacrilegious judges, the people, witnesses and accomplices of the crucifixion, received no manifestation of Divine anger. They died quietly in their beds, on the soil of their beloved country; they suffered neither the pains nor privations of exile.* Their children and the generation who succeeded them whose hands were unstained by the blood of this saint or of this god, alone expiated the supposed crime.

When Israel revolted at the very foot of Sinai against the living God, whose voice, from out the thunder and lightning they had just heard, in that most wondrous and solemn revelation ever vouchsafed to the race of man, the anger of the Lord was at once kindled against the rebellious people. That generation who could doubt the Divine promise and blaspheme against the Eternal, was irrevocably condemned. They were to perish in the desert, amidst toil, fatigue, conflicts and trials of all kinds; but their sons who were guiltless of

* The reign of Claudius which immediately followed the epoch of the condemnation of Jesus, was for the Jews the happiest period of the Roman domination. He granted them many favours, he published two celebrated edicts which permitted them to live according to their law, secured to them all their privileges, enacted on their behalf the most complete liberty of conscience, and condemned and rescinded all the oppressive measures to which they had been subjected.

the crime of their fathers were not to endure the consequences of their fathers' sin. They were to enter the promised land and to slake their thirst in the rivers of milk and honey which were withheld from their fathers.

On the contrary, if we believe the accusers of Judaism when they treat of the condemnation of Christ, every feeling and principle of justice was subverted. The propounders of the sentence of death, the really guilty, if there were any, were spared, and their sons who at the close of a century were torn from their country, dispersed among all nations, reviled, persecuted and exposed to the contempt and the violence of all peoples, and these sons became the expiating victims of a crime which they did not commit!

No! the condemnation of the Children of Israel for the hypothetical sin of their ancestors, the long persecution which would thus have rendered all the nations on the earth the instruments and fulfillers of the decrees of Providence, assuredly proceed not from that merciful and beneficent Deity who revealeth Himself to mortals by His inexhaustible benefits alone.

Alas, we but too often associate His sacred name with our weaknesses and our passions; we willingly consider Him as the participator in our hatred and fanaticism; sometimes even we dare to justify our evil actions by pretending to commit them for the promotion of the glory of God. No! God is not responsible for those impious acts, for those sanguinary wars, for those reciprocal anathemas for which religion is the pretext. All these fratricidal conflicts are an abomination in the eyes of the Eternal. The Great, the Infinite, the All-powerful God needeth

not our arms, our weapons, to avenge His outraged Majesty ; He needeth not to transform the children of mortals into executioners, to excite enmity between brethren, to sow discord among men, in order to punish those who violate His holy laws.

Alas ! we do not consider that thus to attribute to Him our unbrotherly hatred is to make God in our image, and to lower him to the level of humanity. No ; war comes not from God ! no ; fanaticism comes not from God ! no ; persecution comes not from God ! From the beginning of time He hath permitted man, under the action of the free will with which He hath endowed him, to bow to idols made of wood and stone, to manufacture deformed and monstrous images, to practise fearful rites, to sacrifice human beings with their children to horrible divinities ; He causeth not his lightnings to strike the races capable of such excesses ; it sufficeth unto Him gradually to enlighten them, to afford them a distant view of the glorious truth, and to call them unto Himself by the power of reason, by the voice of conscience, and by the striking phenomena which surround them. And this God, so full of mercy and of toleration towards idolatry so obstinate, He who grants each day equally to those who believe in Him, and to those who despise and blaspheme His holy name, life, the warmth of the sun, daily bread, all the gifts and all the enjoyments of His magnificent universe—can this God have suddenly shown Himself to be actuated by eternal hatred towards His chosen people, His beloved servants, because they committed a fault in not attributing a Divine nature to him who came to preach a law opposed to the immortal code of Sinai !

No ! the will of God is foreign to the violence of which Israel has so long been the victim. This persecution has ever proceeded from causes wholly human ; it has resulted from events both political and religious, of which passion and blindness alone refuse to take account.

II.

WE may state the political cause to be the following :

We have above described the heroic struggle maintained by Judea against Rome, the mistress of the world. This gigantic empire, to whose power all nations had succumbed, suddenly encountered a resistance to which it was not habituated : it sent its best army and its bravest captains in vain ; Judea, bending beneath its might, raised her head again and again from under the yoke, and forced her conquerors to carry on a perpetual conflict. The Jews fought not for their country alone : they defended their religion, their worship, and their God ; in other words, alike their own future and that of the whole world. They met the astonished Romans with a steadfastness, an energy, and indomitable resolution which, during more than a century, kept the whole force of Imperial Rome in check. The anger of the Roman emperors and people was excited to its utmost degree, when they beheld a little people—"the smallest of the peoples of the earth"—refuse to submit to the rulers of the universe. Tacitus has preserved for us the memory of this feeling of irritation in this passage, "What increased the rage of the Romans, said he, was to see that the Jews alone did not yield ;"—"*Augebat*

iras quod soli Judæei non cessissent."* Thus, when Israel was at length vanquished, when Jerusalem became nought save a heap of ruins, a loud shout of joy resounded from one end of the Roman world to the other, and Rome consecrated a triumphal arch to the memory of this great event.

This was the principal cause of the hatred subsisting between the victors and the vanquished. The Cæsars clearly comprehended that the Jews, even when in fetters, and torn from their country, would ever remain unsubdued, and that with eyes and hearts turned ever towards Jerusalem, they would never cease to hatch plots and to attempt insurrections, in order to reconquer and re-establish the sanctuary of the Eternal. The terrible revolt of Barkochebas did in fact, soon imperil the safety of the empire, while its existence was ever threatened by the distant, yet swelling torrent of barbarian hordes. Reasons of policy and anxiety for their own safety suggested to the Cæsars the exercise of exceptional severity against the unceasing agitation fomented by the Jews, who were constantly exposed to rigorous and violent measures of repression. They were forbidden to visit the wailing-place of the ancient sanctuary; they were dispersed throughout the length and breadth of the empire; they were subjected to the work and ignominy of slaves. Merciless laws were enacted, prohibiting them from reading the Bible and traditional writings. In a word, all the energetic means were used to subdue these great, yet vanquished opponents, which menaced power ever adopts against those whom it deems its enemies.

In truth, the Jews were enemies! If the Romans

* Tacitus, book v, chap. x.

never pardoned them for their defence of their country and their endless rebellions, they in their turn, never pardoned the Romans for the destruction of the holy city, for the tyrannical severity to which they alone, among the numerous subjects of the empire, were subjected. Thus arose between the victors and the vanquished an equal hatred, which increased in depth and bitterness day by day. And this hatred first felt by the government, was soon shared by the governed. The Roman people became accustomed to consider the Jews as a dangerous and accursed nation, one to be pursued, conquered and annihilated at any cost, because they were the irreconcilable enemies of the empire and of the human race. To be the adversary of the empire was in fact, virtually at this period, to be that of the whole world. Rome held in her hand the sceptre of universal dominion; she was the head and the queen of all known peoples whom she dragged in chains linked to her triumphal car. Thus, whithersoever the exiles of Zion directed their faltering steps after their dark defeat, they found the Romans ever implacable, the pro-consuls ever stern, the generals still trembling with indignation at the long repulse of the legions of Judea; everywhere in fact, they encountered a law of oppression, a spirit of anger, vengeance, and persecution. Everywhere, in the north, and in the south, "from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof," in the deserts of Africa, as in the rich districts of Asia, among the insulated Britons, as among the Scythians of the Euxine Sea, and amid the forests of Germany, as in the druidical fields of Gaul, everywhere did these mournful outcasts behold the eagles and the standards ranged against them, the pikes pointed, and the agents of Rome ready

to pour out on them their menaces, their violence, and their stubborn anathemas.

III.

From the commencement of the Roman domination, with other motives of persecution and political rigour, a religious element was associated. All the nations previously vanquished by the Romans were Pagans, having a nearly identical mythology, exercising the same worship, and holding the same belief and doctrines as their conquerors. In their struggle with the Jews, the Romans found themselves for the first time face to face with a resisting religion and a new principle. The Hebrews in truth, defended far less their territory, than their faith; for in it dwelt that which was of power to increase tenfold their courage and their strength. The Romans easily understood that religion was the secret of the heroism displayed by this strange people; therefore all their efforts were directed to the destruction of the worship and the law of Israel. Statues were placed in the Temple of Jerusalem, and attempts were made to substitute Roman idolatry for the worship of the Eternal. The sole effect of this sacrilege was to further stimulate the energies and despair of the defenders of Judea.

Besides, it was not without astonishment and emotion that Rome contemplated a religion so unlike that followed by the whole world, one so simple, so contrary in principle to all the notions universally accepted as to the nature of the gods, and their relation to mortals.

They felt a secret presentiment that the "Unknown God," whom Israel adored, would one day annihilate the divinities of Paganism, and would reign alone over that immense land on which they had trodden in triumph. What Greece had done in respect of Socrates, that other revealer of the One, Only and Infinite God, was enacted pitilessly by Rome in respect of the Jews. As Athens had pointed the sarcasms of Aristophanes at the illustrious philosopher, so did Rome point against the Jews the raillery, the derision, and the epigrams of her poets and writers. All the satirists of the empire exhausted their quivers, of shafts of ridicule and disdain, which they aimed at the Hebrews, whilst the most serious historians, amongst them Tacitus himself, spread the most false notions among the people concerning the traditions and religious principles of Israel. Did they not go so far as to declare that in the extreme end of the "Holy of Holies" (that mysterious sanctuary in which, on the days of solemn convocation, the high priests pronounced the Ineffable Name), the head of an Ass was concealed from the gaze of the profane and was secretly worshipped ?*

Besides, the Jews, in the estimation of the government and the people, were not only a sect whose doctrines and religious faith were hidden and incomprehensible, but were also the despisers of the Pagan gods, the implacable adversaries of that material polytheism which then formed the belief of the whole of society, and the very basis of its organisation. The heathen priests, far more perspicacious than the Cæsars, far more uneasy as to the danger incurred by their idolatrous theories from the promulgation of monotheism, excited anew the

* Tacitus, *Narratives*, book v, chap. 4, and following.

easily-moved masses against the Jews, while they at the same time counselled the emperors to the employment of excessive severities. Thus the difference of religion dug ever deeper and deeper the abyss first opened by political causes between the Romans and the Hebrews.

A fatal mistake augmented the reciprocal enmity in this respect. The members of the Christian sect bore, at its rise, no external and characteristic sign by which they could be distinguished from the Jews. The name of Jew was applied equally to the apostles of the Gospel and to the followers of the law of Moses: by it was understood all natives of Judea, without defining whether they were converts to the new faith of Christ, or faithful adherents of the ancient ancestral law which the Christian reformers had attempted to modify. We have above seen that Christianity in the Roman world was actuated by a spirit of proselytism that nothing could arrest. Its apostles and neophytes, while forming truly secret societies amid the dark recesses of the catacombs, threatened the religious and political status then existing with a sudden dissolution. It is well known how the emperors and Roman pontiffs met these revolutionary attempts which were nevertheless destined to triumph. They caused the adherents of the new religion to perish by thousands in the amphitheatres and catacombs. The blood of these innumerable martyrs flowed in torrents. The wild beasts of the circus, and that other yet more terrible wild beast called the populace, were let loose upon them while thirsting for murder and carnage. But the Jews, confounded under the same designation with the Christians, were also confounded with them in the same sentence of death, were sacrificed in the same massacres, were like them put to fearful torture, and were assailed by the blows of the gladiator, and by the

teeth of infuriated beasts, and the persecutions which reached the apostles of Christ were extended with blind and indiscriminate fury to those whom the Christians accused of being the murderers of their God.

IV.

Have we given a sufficiently clear statement in this rapid analysis of the essentially material causes which had excited the anger of the Pagan nations against the hapless remnant of Israel in imperial Rome? of the desperate resistance of the Hebrew people, of their repeated revolts, of the danger to which, on several occasions, they exposed the empire; of the monotheistic doctrine which formed so singular a contrast amidst ancient polytheism, and in which was involved a still greater peril for the society of that day? Have we not proved that all these causes combined with the hatred entertained against and felt by, the first Christians were reasons sufficient to account for, according to the natural relation of events, the persecution, contempt, and outrages of which the Jews were the victims during the Roman domination? Let us further inquire whether their sad position in the now Christianised world may not be attributed to motives equally explicable and quite as human, without its being necessary to believe in a supernatural chastisement, which would be to insult the justice and mercy of the living God.

V.

When at length Christianity, on issuing from the catacombs, seized the sceptre of the empire, and in the

person of Constantine triumphantly ascended the throne of the Cæsars, it found everywhere disseminated throughout all grades of society a hostile sentiment towards the Jews, that was already the growth of several centuries. And they saw no necessity for repudiating, in this respect, the inheritance bequeathed them by pagan Rome. In truth, had they desired so to do, perhaps the power would have failed them. Thus, the triumph of Christianity was among heathen people alone; Christians were simply converted polytheists. The grandeur of the Christian apostolate in fact consists in its having won over all ancient mythology to the doctrine of the Gospel, which doctrine, though deviating greatly from the law of Sinai, is nevertheless one of the branches, and an immediate offshoot of the sacred tree of which Judaism forms the vigorous trunk.

Christianity, in order to accomplish its mission and attain its end, accepted ancient society as it found it, with its priesthood, its various institutions, its prejudices and its weaknesses. It knew how to accommodate itself to the spirit of the times, in order to obtain possession of supreme power. In the same way in which, at a much later period, another ambitious man exclaimed, "Paris is well worth a mass," primitive Christianity deemed that Rome, in other words, the domination of the then known world was worth a little concession. That which appeared in the name of universal liberty and fraternity, made a compromise with absolute power, and being content to reign side by side with the emperors, it left society divided as previously into masters and slaves, tyrants and helots, possessors of immense territories, and mendicants lacking bread. It reserved its marvellous design of social equality for the future

world, and for the mysterious epoch of a life beyond the grave. That which first spoke in the name of evangelical humility, thus saying, "My kingdom is not of this world," made a compromise with the haughty pagan priesthood, organised a new pontificate, and transferred to the new church the forms, the titles, and the pomp of polytheistic worship. Finally, that which had appeared in the name of the one Only, Immaterial, and Infinite God, made a compromise with a plurality of gods. The trinitarian principle, while preserving the idea of a divine unity, modified it, and rendered it easier of acceptance to peoples long accustomed to a plurality of divinities, half-mortal and half-divine, to the worship of images, and to a whole system of attractive, graceful, and highly artistic mythology. Thus, Christianity was in every respect a skilful and successful compromise, and it may be truly affirmed that from Roman society it received as much as, perhaps more than it bestowed.

We may cite among the passions and prejudices which Christianity found wholly developed and too deeply rooted to be dispelled, the universal antipathy felt by the Roman people towards the Jews. The new faith had no inducement to oppose, whether among the powerful classes, or among the lower classes, the hatred inspired by the proscribed race of Zion. It had, on the contrary, many inducements to encourage it.

VI.

All the chiefs of the new religion, all the priests of the new Church were themselves Romans. The first apostles who were proud of being Hebrews had long before past

away. Not a single Jew was any longer to be found among the clergy of Christian Rome; all, born among the populations inimical to Israel, had imbibed from infancy the same feelings of contempt for the vanquished sons of Judea, and the new faith had in no way weakened this original animosity. With political motives, which were shared in this respect by all citizens of the empire, was combined a special and far more influential consideration.

The Jews were virtually a living, eternal and invincible protest against victorious Christianity. By the voice of all their doctrines, by that of all their declarations they said to the religion of Christ, "THOU ART A LIE." While bending beneath the yoke amid all their sufferings, they ever exclaimed "There is but one God." They reproached the apostles and the votaries of the Gospel with having distorted the sense and the texts of the sacred writings, while pretending to deduce from them the truth of their Apostolate, the prediction and the revelation of their Messiah. They declared that Jesus was but a man, a bold reformer. They designated the idea of making him a divinity as blasphemy. Finally they approved the sentence of death pronounced against this innovator who sought to overthrow the law revealed by the Eternal. Thus, on all these points, they presented a striking and obstinate denial of all the principles on which the Christian religion was based.

Christianity had to struggle at the onset against powerful heresies; but the opposition offered by the Jews was without doubt the most formidable, for it impugned the very essence of Christian doctrine. To overcome by persuasion the objections raised against the Christian doctrine in its earliest stages by the Jews, was soon

found to be a useless attempt; for the Jews would not allow themselves to be either convinced or converted. Faithful to their ancient law and pressing its venerable code to their hearts, they resisted amid all the threats of their persecutors, all attempts at proselytism, and passing on thus among all nations, they offered an eternal protest against triumphant Christianity. Thus, much was scarcely needed to embitter the Romans against the defenders of Judea, the disturbers of the empire. The Christianised members of pagan society became savagely incensed against their old enemies; with political hostility was soon associated religious fanaticism, and the Christian bishops, in order to consolidate their own power, deemed it needless to calm popular fury. The masses were everywhere let loose upon the remnant of Israel. Those who had previously been considered dangerous conspirators, the revilers of the deities of Olympus were at this juncture indicated as "Deicides," who had put to death the revealer of the Gospel, the redeemer and liberator of the whole human race.

Once launched on this course of cruelty and sinister retaliation, Roman society knew no bounds. At all points of the horizon, the chase of the Jews began, and the bloody dawn of the middle ages arose on the unfortunate martyrs of Jerusalem. A dark and sad period was this, when the aversion of the idolatrous Roman and of the converted pagan merging into one sentiment of passion and of hatred, left not a moment of truce, security, or repose to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to that race who, by means of the Decalogue and the Bible, had bestowed on the world light and truth. It was necessary to reach that epoch, the close of the eighteenth century, at which

the principles of human right once more triumphed amid the convulsions of a social revolution, ere the persecution was arrested at the call of outraged conscience, ere the supposed Deicides could regain their title and their right in civilised society as free human beings. But in this terrible period of the middle age, whose every day is marked by Israel as a funereal date, what calumny, what bloody sacrifices, what tortures and massacres have we not to record !

VII.

WHEN events have such significance, when fanaticism and persecution proceed so manifestly from popular prejudice and sentiments of revenge, wherefore associate the name of the Almighty with these passions, and thus render Him an accomplice of the errors and crimes of man ! When we view it under a simply human aspect, between victors and vanquished, between executioner and victim, we easily comprehend the tenacity of this blind hatred. History displays to us instances of equally terrible and persistent detestation between hostile nations, who had not the same motives which actuated the destroyers of Jerusalem and the remnant of Judea,—the triumphant Gospel and the oppressed Bible. Even in our days we are surprised to see whole races of men persecute, oppose and destroy each other without mercy or intermission, from age to age. Not at the period only of the decline of the Roman empire has religious fanaticism excited fratricidal war and armed the members of the human family against each other. These sacrilegious conflicts may be explained, though not justified, as im-

pelled by the depraved instincts which sometimes move the heart of man and the acts of nations. Even in our days the sinister cry, "death to the conquered!" has been the law and the rule of human rights, and the most barbarous means have been employed to enforce this anti-social doctrine. The hour has at length struck when more generous principles are held sacred by peoples of modern times; but we must not be surprised that for this, as in all things, ages have been required to overcome prejudices and error, and to establish truth.

Of this anathema pronounced against the conquered, the sons of Israel have been victims ever since the days immediately following the destruction of the Holy City. Religious antagonism heightening the violence of this cruel law, the Jews have everywhere been considered enemies of the State and of religion, have dragged their wandering and menaced existence from town to town, and from kingdom to kingdom, everywhere despised, everywhere repulsed, everywhere detested. Thus was it that the masses, accustomed to behold these persecuted beings ever living in bondage and shame, came at last to view them as sons forsaken by God, and to regard the condemnation of Christ as an explanation of the long and fearful misery by which they expiated the crime imputed to their ancestors. Thus, by this fatal chain of ideas and events, was the secular prejudice against the Jews originated and developed. Political motives and religious passions have alone given rise to the inimical feelings which have been their portion throughout all ages and in all countries. Surely it is forbidden to profane the majesty of God, by imputing to Him the crimes and cruelties committed by man.

CONCLUSION.

I.

LET us now cast a backward glance and measure the road which we have traversed. The proposition we placed before us, while repudiating with justifiable indignation the accusation of "deicide" which, during eighteen centuries, has rested on the Jewish people, was this :

"Is it true that the Jews knew; is it true that the Jews could have known that Jesus was the Son of God, and God Himself? If they did not know it, if no proof of his divinity was granted them, how could they have been guilty?" To this question the Gospel furnishes the reply.

We have accepted the Christian dogma without discussion, without criticism, without reservation. We have purposely abstained from censuring it, or calling it in question. Unlike the writers of the Voltairean school, we have not pointed out either the numerous contradictions, or the flagrant errors which the four narratives contain; nor, as do Strauss and the German school, have we attributed to these accounts a mythical character, by which the history of the son of Mary is placed in the category of fables and legends; neither have we, like Rénan, divested his life of the supernatural incidents with which it abounds. Nor have we cast any doubt on the truth of the Christian doctrine, nor blamed Christianity for having accepted the divinity of Jesus. No; the

matter we have had to consider is, according to our view, far more important than these theological controversies. We had not to investigate what may be true or false in the doctrines of the Church ; we desired only to defend an oppressed race, proscribed during nearly two thousand years, on the pretext that they had voluntarily put to death a God who had come to earth in order to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind.

We have not even inquired whether it is credible that a God of infinite power, justice, and mercy could have needed, in order to save humanity, to invest Himself with a mortal form and to cause Himself to be killed by men, cruelly selected by Him to be the instruments of this sanguinary expiation, and to be sentenced by this fatal act, to universal execration. Setting aside these grave considerations, and accepting in its textual signification the very book which has been made alike witness and accuser in respect of the Jewish people, we have honestly consulted its pages, the sole record that remains to us of that memorable epoch. In them we have endeavoured to trace how, by what signs, by what words, Jesus revealed himself to the Jews ; by what characteristic traits the inhabitants of Judea, who were trembling with anxiety and hope for the advent of the Messiah, the son of David, could have recognised in him the messenger of the Eternal, the divine Word made flesh, and God made manifest under a human form.

The entire life of the son of Mary has passed before our eyes, from the moment of his conception to that of his resurrection. The Gospel has proved to us that on no occasion did the people witness the miracles which were stated to have been performed, and by which alone, according to the circumstances of that time, a permanent

and serious belief could have been generated in the minds of the masses, as in those of the heads, of the Hebrew people. On the contrary, we see that this God, while walking the earth, shrouded himself ever in mystery and darkness, fulfilled his most decisive revelations in the most profound secrecy, in the presence of only a few proselytes, urged on his disciples the most complete concealment, and obstinately refused to give to the Jews that proof of his divinity which they unceasingly besought him to grant.

His miraculous birth took place in a solitary manger ; his heavenly call, at the moment when he received baptism at the hands of John the Baptist, was simply an individual vision ; the only witnesses of his transfiguration on Thabor were two disciples on whom he enjoined absolute silence ; his resurrection was unseen by mortal eye, and his most fervent apostles required material proofs ere they gave it credence, which proofs no other voice in Israel was called on to verify.

Was it possible that this clandestine divinity could be accepted by the Hebrews, when we see how often his most intimate disciples themselves doubt and protest against, the declarations of Jesus? From the examination of all the texts that we have quoted, it appears to us that anyone who does not pronounce in favour of the Jewish people must be influenced by a most obstinate pre-possession.

We think, besides, that we have proved on the strength of superabundant evidence that the miracles performed by the son of Mary, the sublimity of his moral predication, the important reforms that he sought to introduce in the morals and manners of his time sufficed to cause him to be regarded as a great prophet, but

were far from investing him with a divine character, or involving the possibility of his sharing the power of the Almighty, according to the conceptions of the adorers of the absolute Unity.

II.

YES, in the eyes of the contemporaneous Jews, Jesus of Nazareth was a new and glorious prophet ; his words, his ideas recalled and re-awakened in Israel the teachings and traditions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, imparting to them a higher significance and purer form. The people who had long been the dupes of numerous imposters audaciously usurping the sacred name of "Nabi," joyfully greeted in the son of Mary, a true seer, a profound moralist and a thorough reformer ; they evinced towards him the greatest respect, and ever received him with enthusiastic ovations, until the moment when, hearing him proclaim himself God and thus infringe one of the grandest principles of the Sinaic revelation, they immediately turned against him, and with one voice demanded that the "blasphemer" should be put to death. And at this very day, after eighteen centuries of conflict, of war, persecution and martyrdom, herein is involved the sole point of contention between Israel and the Christian world. Jesus, a prophet instead of a God, would have been applauded and honored by the Jews, as he was in Judea when he entered Jerusalem amidst the joyous cries of the eager multitude, when the magistrates durst not adopt any severe measures against him, for fear of wounding the quick sympathy of the people waiting anxiously to hear the words of the prophet of

Nazareth. There is nothing in the Gospel which Judaism systematically rejects save the mysteries of the incarnation, of the birth, and of the resurrection of Jesus—God; for, and we cannot too strongly insist on this point, the principles of love to your neighbour, of charity and morality decreed by the founder of Christianity, belong wholly to the Bible and to Hebrew doctrines. Israel would deny her own belief and her traditions of ages, if she did not recognise in the discourses of the Nazarene reformer, the inspiration and the echo of that which has formed her steadfast faith ever since the Sinaic revelation.

III.

It will ever be an incomprehensible enigma for the Jewish people, that Jesus, or rather the predicted Messiah coming to us principally to free Israel, would not, or could not accomplish that deliverance, the specific object of his human mission.

And did not the divine word declare that the son of David, the anointed of the Eternal should come to deliver the Jewish people and cause the torch of Zion to illuminate the world? And what effect did the advent of Jesus produce, save to plunge Israel into new disasters and into deeper and more cruel degradation. The Jews, it is true, are reproached with having drawn down these calamities on their own heads by their incredulity and condemnation of Jesus. But the divine prophecies nowhere refer to these doubts, or to this resistance; nay declare that on the day of Messiah's advent, Israel will be free from the yoke of the stranger and from pagan terror; the nations will bow to the yoke of David and

will adore the One Only God, to the extremities of the earth.

We would ask every candid mind whether it is possible that the Jews could see in the words of Jesus, in the acts of his life and in the events occurring subsequently to his death, the accomplishment of those solemn promises which were their hope and their support? That people, who were to be saved by the advent of the Messiah, were overwhelmed by new disasters. Torn from the land of their birth, massacred by the Roman armies, they beheld the Temple of the living God overthrown and reduced to a heap of ruins, and the holy city destroyed which was to have been the centre and the queen of the whole world, the "house of prayer for all nations." They were dragged into exile and slavery, and delivered over to the most fearful torments; they became the butt of all outrages, of all hatred, of all calumnies that political and religious fanaticism could invent. He who was the chosen of God, the favoured son of the Eternal, was thenceforth the accursed, the disinherited, the pariah among his fellow men, and day by day his sufferings accumulated on his head. No more repose, no more pardon, no more happiness! And he was to recognise a divine work, the hand of a saving Messiah in the misery that crushed him! No! he remained with reason assured that he was the victim of all that was most iniquitous in human passion; and in his sorrow, he held fast to the hope that the solemn day of redress would arrive.

Did not the general condition of society also prevent the recognition of Jesus as the Son of God, as the Messiah? According to all the promises of prophecy, the advent of the Redeemer was to inaugurate for the whole world,

an era of peace and universal toleration ; whereas, after the promulgation of Christianity, after it had obtained universal dominion, the earth seemed more than ever delivered over to war, to controversy, and to all the excesses of fanaticism. A conflict among all principles and all doctrines, among all peoples and kings ; a conflict among religious sects ; intolerance and persecution raging on every step of the social ladder ; bloody revolutions ; incessant and terrible convulsions ; the name of the Eternal God associated with all deeds of blood and invoked to justify the most fearful cruelties ; entire peoples, numerous races of men exterminated in the name of religion ; in one word, discord brandishing his burning torch amid the world of man : such is the picture that human society has presented during the last eighteen centuries.

Once more then, we ask, was it possible that in the midst of this moral anarchy, of these unrestrained passions, Israel, the prey of the most fearful trials, wandering and dispersed in the midst of nations, proscribed and execrated in all times, under all reigns, in all countries and in all regions of heaven, could believe in the divinity of a religion in whose name such fearful crimes were enacted, could believe in the actuality of the advent of that era of universal justice and happiness which had been proclaimed to him as the revealing sign of the coming of the Messiah ?

IV.

BUT the sufferings of the Jewish people, it is affirmed, are the expiation for their crime : they closed their eyes to the light, they killed a God, they rejected the salva-

tion that was offered them, and during eighteen hundred years they have endured chastisement for this sin.

Did they indeed close their eyes to the light, they who were awaiting with such feverish anxiety the coming of the liberator predicted? Was it not rather thenceforth evident, does not all that previously happened irrefutably prove that this liberator would not, or could not reveal himself to the Jews, and that they were systematically left in ignorance of all that could enlighten them as to the person, the nature, and the real mission of the incarnate God, of Christ the Saviour?

And according to the original and traditional design of the Christian Church, it was necessary that it should be thus. What, in fact, formed the essence and caused the grandeur and success of Christianity among pagan nations is, that God Himself, the Infinite, the Eternal, came down to suffer on earth in order to redeem sinful humanity. If we were to discard the passion and the death of the Divine Being in his human form, Christianity would be without foundation, without aim, without result. We will not now inquire into all that this doctrine involves which is mysterious and inexplicable to human reason. We will only ascertain that according to the Christian system, the salvation of the human race could be secured by the voluntary sacrifice only of a God, who presented himself as an offering for the salvation of mankind. For those who hold this faith, this is a grand thought, a magnificent hope. But what would result therefrom? That if the Jews, who were unfortunately chosen to be the instruments of this work of expiation, had not pronounced the condemnation of Jesus, the divine aim would have been unfulfilled, sinful humanity would have continued to be the prey of the spirit of evil, and Christianity would

have been stifled at its birth. And what more may be deduced? That Jesus, dwelling peacefully in Judea, tolerated by the agents of public authority, admired by the people, was simply an additional member of the ranks of the prophets of Israel, but was not the initiator of a new religion, or of the immense proselytising movement which finally pervaded and ruled the Roman empire. Had the apostles not been repulsed by the faithful adherents of Judaism, they would not have carried the Gospel to the Gentiles, and long centuries would have elapsed before the Bible reached heathen populations, even with the aid of the rash commentaries of the early Christians. Considered in this light, the resentment of the Christians against the Jews is not only injustice, but also ingratitude.

Yes! ingratitude, for by means of these Jews, the blind and passive agents of the great designs of God, was Christianity founded, has been developed and has triumphed throughout the world. The cross, which was the instrument of torture, has become the symbol of the Christian victory, and of universal redemption! and the Calvary on which the God suffered death has shone like a lighted beacon in the darkness of Paganism. Instead of persecuting and execrating the Jews, Christians ought to have blessed them; for without the providential and predestined execution of Jesus, what would have been the fate of Christianity? What would have become of the Gospel, and of the new doctrine? Where would be this whole Christian world, with its splendour, its hierarchy, its pontiffs, its saints, and all the gorgeous pomp by which, for the last eighteen hundred years, it has held in subjection nearly all the peoples of the earth?

V.

THUS the historical development of Christianity, far from overcoming and dispelling, naturally tended to strengthen the incredulity of the Jewish people. Do we, however, affirm that Judaism obstinately closes its eyes to the grandeur of Christian civilisation, and the progress it has operated in the world? Far from this. While not adoring a God in Jesus, while unable to see in Christianity the realisation of the divine predictions, Judaism, nevertheless, recognises in it, according to the providential order of events, one of the grandest epochs of humanity, a gigantic step made towards the goal which Judaism itself seeks to reach. Let us enter upon the definition of this thought as the conclusion of the important study to which we have here applied ourselves.

VI.

THE moral and religious condition of the whole world, at the time when the Christian doctrine was enunciated by its founder, may be described thus: Polytheism held universal sway; it had on its side material force combined with the acceptance of the masses; it was also upheld by the prestige and attractiveness of a sensual and graceful system of mythology, which was indulgent towards all human weaknesses, and which, instead of idealising its divine creations, invested them with all the passions of the frail inhabitants of the earth. The worship of a spiritual God, the dogma of a divine Unity were preserved only in a remote corner of Judea, by a

people (the smallest of all the peoples of the earth), whom the singularity of its religion, the jealous care with which it guarded the sacred depôt of its belief, and the contempt which it displayed for strange idols rendered hateful to Pagan society.

The Jews, manifestly powerless to resist the immense majority of the idolatrous races and having been vanquished in several unequal conflicts, had wholly secluded themselves and concealed the treasure of their faith at Jerusalem, in order to preserve it from all profane contact and admixture. They had placed a hedge round the divine law, separating it with stern solicitude from the religious and social laws of the surrounding nations.

They thus devoted themselves to defending it from all outward attack; but it was impossible for them to conceive either the idea or the hope of thrusting it on the world. It sufficed to them to protect the sacred torch kindled on the burning summit of Mount Sinai from the breath of contrary winds. The time had long passed when the prophets transmitted to Pagan nations the words and decrees of the Eternal, when Jonas commanded the Ninevahites to repent, when Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah menaced Egypt, Edom, Tyre, Babylon, and Assyria. Judea found it too difficult to defend her Unitarian belief, for her to aspire to the empire of the world. She was content to live faithful only to the purity of her traditions. But the time was come when this individual life was about to be rendered impossible. The Cæsars, conquerors of all known nations could not permit that Judea alone, with its narrow territory and its small number of inhabitants, should escape their domination. Roman polytheism and Jewish

monotheism would inevitably range themselves in order of battle for a savage conflict. For a long time previously the historians, philosophers, and moralists of Rome and Greece had cast inquisitive and inimical glances at this strange Judaism, of which the dogmas and principles presented so striking a contrast to those of the whole world. They ridiculed the God they could not understand, they insulted this hidden God, whom nothing material had revealed to mortal sight; they hated this people, so different in manners and language, from all the other political families of the earth. They were always disposed to calumniate and to imprecate a religion, the absolute spiritualism of which was the condemnation of their materialistic dogmas. Philo at Alexandria, and Josephus at Jerusalem and at Rome had courageously and devotedly defended the Jewish doctrine, already attacked, misrepresented and persecuted by contemporary fanaticism and prejudice. But their efforts had been powerless to avert the hour of final struggle; everything indicated the approach of a terrible conflict between Rome and Jerusalem, between polytheism and monotheism.

Thus paganism, having on its side the gigantic power and invincible armies of the Roman empire, was sure to triumph easily over a little people, already enfeebled and disorganised by the captivity of a number of its sons and by fearful disasters, and having delivered from their earlier captivity but a small portion of their tribes.

Yes! the Mosaic idea incurred the risk of being overthrown and annihilated, notwithstanding the heroism of its champions, in this struggle between a handful of men and Rome, the mistress of the world. And if polytheism had then triumphed, that divine truth might have

been for ever quenched which Israel had so faithfully guarded, from the days of Abraham and Moses, at the price of so much suffering and sacrifice, in order to transmit it, at the destined moment, to all his brothers of the human race.

That epoch had not yet come. The God of the Spirits of all flesh, the One, Only and Infinite God, the invisible and immaterial God could not thus have been presented, without compromise and in all His glory, to races of idolaters. For they could not have comprehended Him. Too much accustomed to humanise the Divinity, it was impossible that their mental vision could be elevated to so lofty a conception as the doctrine of the Unity.

VII.

THE Eternal God then employed some of the providential means by which, with the mystery of His infinite wisdom, He solves difficulties with marvellous singleness of design that every human effort would be powerless to unravel.

Between Judaism and the pagan world thus placed in fatal contact and destined to oppose each other in mortal strife, God caused Christianity to arise, a point of meeting between Jewish monotheism and Roman polytheism ; a wonderful compromise by which the Jewish dogma was introduced into, and subjugated the world, but clothed in a new form adapted to the ideas and social genius of the epoch.

By these means, an extraordinary phenomenon was produced, a manifest revelation of the divine power ever acting on the course of events here below. Judaism, while politically overpowered and having its nationality de-

stroyed by the irresistible force of the Roman empire, nevertheless held sway over its conquerors in the spiritual and moral world. While awaiting the moment when she should win it over to the doctrine of the Divine Unity, Judaism bestowed on it a God in the person of one of her most remarkable prophets and illustrious sages. Thus it happened, that while Rome believed it had triumphed at Jerusalem and buried the Divine law beneath the ruins of the Temple, Jerusalem, on the contrary, rose gloriously from her sepulchre, speedily overthrew the old world, and by means of the Bible and the Gospel, founded a new civilisation on the ruins of Paganism.

But amid the materialistic social conditions of that period, this triumph of the vanquished over the victors could be secured by means only of a clever combination, which pure Judaism could not have accepted without for ever sacrificing her fundamental principles, but which rising Christianity could on the contrary adopt without danger. This then in fact, was what this new form of Judaism, popularised by the disciples of Jesus, yielded to Pagan society in exchange for universal dominion.

It admitted in common with Pagan mythology, anthropomorphism, that is the possible incarnation of God in the human form, a doctrine that Judaism repudiated with unqualified repugnance. It skilfully combined the belief in the plurality of gods with the Unitarian doctrine, by the declaration of the Trinity, an ingenious theory which, while recognising three distinct persons in God, blends them into a mysterious and inscrutable unity. Christianity, whilst expelling its immoral and sensual divinities from ancient Olympus, peopled the heavens with Saints, whose intercession was allpowerful

with the Heavenly Father and His divine Son, and who in the eyes of the Pagan world presented a spiritualised image of the ancient demi-gods. The angels themselves, according to the traditions of the Bible the glorious messengers of the Eternal, now assumed the forms and the faces of those roguish cupids who surrounded the thrones of the immortal gods. Polytheism thus transformed, could in some sort recognise and worship one of its most graceful divinities in the mother of Christ, in the immaculate virgin, a type of beauty and love exalted to their highest moral ideal. Even the three Graces were not devoid of a symbol in the charming and mystic group of the three divine Virtues. In consequence of these concessions, Christianity found acceptance with heathen nations who would assuredly have rejected the Jewish religion on account of its unconditional spirituality.

A well-known Apologue relates that Truth, rising one day naked from her well, alarmed and put to flight all who beheld her, while Fable, richly attired, an object of the adoration and homage of mortals, passed along the same path on which she overtook poor Truth, shivering with cold, petrified and forsaken. She took compassion on her, covered her with her radiant mantle, adorned her with jewels and brilliants, and introduced her, attired in these splendid garments, to a surprised and delighted world.

Thus Christianity borrowed from the pagan formula those rich ornaments which had rendered them beautiful and attractive in the eyes of ancient civilisation, in order to disseminate among idolatrous nations the truths of the laws of God. It consented to modify the primitive and severe form of the law of Sinai, but it preserved the

leading idea. Its specific work was to spiritualise, by means of mystic symbolism, the dogma of Paganism, while vivifying them with the breath of the Unity of God a pure spirit and marking them with the indelible impress of Jewish theogony. The Christian Trinity, while involving a compromise with Polytheism, is none the less an energetic affirmation of the Jewish Unity. Under the shelter of this mysterious doctrine, the Bible, the Book of Books, the Decalogue, the law of God have permeated the whole world according to the letter, according to the spirit, and according to their primitive purity, gradually lighting up the darkness pervading idolatrous worship, conveying to man the idea and the consciousness of eternal truths, and by means of the progress of thought and of morals, gradually conducting him to the knowledge of that great unitarian principle which Roman society was incapable of comprehending.

This is what Christianity has done ; this is the manner in which it saved the faith of Israel from the inevitable destruction with which it was menaced by victorious Polytheism ; this is the truly providential work which it has accomplished and is accomplishing here below. And can it then be supposed that Judaism is the enemy of Christianity ? No ! No ! Though encountering wicked passions and pitiless executioners in Christian society ; though persecuted by the erring sons who, issuing from its midst, forgot that they were its promulgators in the world, it has never confounded the misdeeds of men with the work itself of which Christianity is the agent.

Judaism knows, clearly perceives that Christianity is a bridge thrown across the abyss which separates it from other peoples ; and throughout ages she has seen that all

those great intellects which direct universal progress pass along this divine bridge in order to reach her ; that all profound thinkers meditating on eternal truth, walk daily by the light of the Bible and thus cause all modern society to walk with them towards the belief in the Unity of God, and the Unity of the human race.

No ! Judaism does not curse Christianity ; she honors in it the revelation of the great moral principles, of the sublime virtues which regenerated the ancient world and wresting it from the worship of matter and the errors of idolatry, initiated it in the religion of the spirit and in the duties which the Sinaic revelation proclaimed. In it she admires one of the most glorious epochs of humanity, a providential revolution which opened to man a new source of sentiments, of ideas, of progress in all channels of human intellect, in all aspirations of the human soul. But she especially appreciates it as a powerful mediator between Israel and the human race ; as an indefatigable pioneer who prepares, in the deserts of paganism, the way of the Eternal ; as a missionary who disseminates the word and the book of Truth to the extremities of the earth ; as a sower who casts into the fertile soil beneath the four corners of the horizon, the mysterious seed of which Judaism is destined to be the reaper.

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

See Note 1, Page 54.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN, VIII.

12 ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself ; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true : for I know whence I came, and whither I go ; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

15 Ye judge after the flesh ; I judge no man.

16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true ; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father ? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father : if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple : and no man laid hands on him ; for his hour was not yet come.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins : whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself ? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath ; I am from above : ye are of this world ; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins : for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou ? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.

26 I have many things to say and to judge of you : but he that sent me is true ; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself ; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

29 And he that sent me is with me : the Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please him.

30 As he spake these words many believed on him.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed ;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man : how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free ?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever : *but* the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed ; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father ; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God : this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication ; we have one Father, *even* God.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me : for I proceeded forth and came from God ; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech ? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell *you* the truth ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin ? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me ?

47 He that is of God heareth God's words : ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil ?

49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil ; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50 And I seek not mine own glory : there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets ; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead ? and the prophets are dead : whom makest thou thyself ?

54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing : it is my Father that honoureth me ; of whom ye say, that he is your God :

55 Yet ye have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you : but I know him, and keep his saying.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw *it*, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him : but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

See Note 3, Page 99.

ST. JOHN, V.

19 ¶ Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth : and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them* ; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ;

23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man.

28 Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

30 I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 There is another that beareth witness of me ; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man : but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

35 He was a burning and a shining light : and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 But I have greater witness than *that* of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you : for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

39 Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only ?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father : there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words.

ST. JOHN, VI.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God ?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee ? what dost thou work ?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert ; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven ; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me : and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day.

41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven ?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat ?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth me even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

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